



To: Duane Jonlin, Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections
From: Amy Wheelss, NW Energy Coalition
Date: October 12, 2020
Re: Updates to 2018 Seattle Commercial Energy Code

I would like to offer the NW Energy Coalition's support for the proposed updates to the Seattle Commercial Energy Code, 2018 Edition.

The NW Energy Coalition is an alliance of approximately 100 environmental, civic, and human service organizations, progressive utilities, and businesses working for clean and affordable energy. For more than 40 years, we have advocated for energy efficiency as the cheapest, cleanest, and most abundant source of energy to meet our region's demand for energy and capacity. Thanks to investments made in electric energy efficiency since 1978, the region has saved more than 7,000 average megawatts—half the region's growth for demand in electricity, and enough to power five at least Seattle-sized cities.¹

Building energy codes are a key piece of ensuring that we are meeting our energy and capacity needs with energy efficiency, and with the benefit of saving residents and business tenants money on their utility bills. Many of the measures that make our buildings the most efficient—namely HVAC and envelope measures—help save energy when our energy system needs it the most—namely, on cold days in winter when our hydroelectric resources are low and natural gas prices are most volatile. As we move forward toward a cleaner grid, it will become even more critical to deploy strategies that make the best use of our energy.

The proposed changes to the Seattle Commercial Energy Code, 2018 Edition, do just that – they make the best use of our energy resources through increasing efficiency improvements in the envelope, increasing use of on-site solar where practical, and adopting measures that use efficient electric equipment over electric resistance or fossil fuel-fired space and water heating equipment. Overall, these changes cost-effectively keep our new construction on a path toward zero carbon buildings and continue to place Seattle at the forefront of progressive code development.

We also appreciate the open stakeholder process for developing and reviewing the changes. I attended a public meeting earlier in 2020 and most of the public meetings this fall. During these meetings, I heard general agreement with the principles that drove development of these code updates. I also heard good dialogue between attendees and City staff that led to refinement of these updates and helpful clarifications.

Thank you for the work, and we look forward to seeing these code updates continue to advance in the process for adoption.

¹ <https://www.nwcouncil.org/energy/energy-topics/energy-efficiency>