

# State of Nevada Energy Code Collaborative Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2020

Link to Webinar Recording (<https://vimeo.com/413626053>)

## Welcome and Introductions

23 stakeholders joined the second quarter 2020 collaborative online meeting.

## Update Residential Energy Code Field Study (Minute 6:50 in the video recording)

Nevada's code compliance field study plans, and protocols are being adjusted to account for social distancing guidelines and precautions. The group is focusing more on upfront outreach to building departments, gathering permit data and leveraging information from sources such as the insulation trades. Since construction activity is considered "essential," the study is still allowed to move forward, but the researchers are treading carefully to make sure they are acting responsibly towards the builders, the community, and themselves. As data collection is starting in the field, they will just have one researcher on site at a time.

The code compliance study will give us a good look at energy savings achieved and energy savings "left on the table" for new construction of detached single-family houses, using DOE's well-tested methodology. In total, the researchers will conduct at least 126 total site visits (two each at 63 houses, rough-in and final) across the state. We have a sampling plan to fairly represent geographic diversity and construction activity. The permit data is anonymous so that the building department will not know which houses are tested. The point is not to judge a building department (hence the anonymity) but rather to get a data-informed understanding of current energy code compliance and where we need better training.

## Today's Working Environment (Minute 23:20 in the video recording)

Stakeholders participated in an interactive session discussing the current working environment due to COVID-19 and the impacts on the building industry and code (energy) compliance. Each jurisdiction continues to support high levels of building code enforcement and they are implementing more online and virtual permitting, plan reviews, and inspections at varying speeds and degrees of comfort, depending in part on where they were starting with in their jurisdiction. Many jurisdictions have stopped inspections of *occupied* residential spaces. Many continue to perform field inspections of unoccupied residential spaces, and some are doing inspections of commercial spaces with appropriate social distancing. Some are giving the inspectors the option to act according to their comfort level, and a few are offering to do inspections virtually via live video or just through photographs.

Les mentioned that North Las Vegas is attempting to do as much virtual as possible. Amber mentioned the volume of inspections today are similar to activity in the past, but homebuilders have stopped movement on new spec homes and new developments are on pause at this time. All participants agreed that construction activity should see reduced volume by summer after the current wave of construction moves through the construction phases.

Jennifer mentioned that non-essential activity is not permitted on job sites today, which translates to architects not being available onsite as they would have in the past. They are using tools such as GoToMeeting and Zoom otherwise the architectural community has not seen much difference in their work today.

Workforce reductions are occurring in the construction trades. Amber mentioned the concrete trades have seen the first wave of layoffs as they are in the first phase of construction of residential. Homebuilders have started to let staff go, and Les mentioned that he has heard some trades have been asked by homebuilders if they can reduce their costs.

Jennifer mentioned there is also a supply chain issue for building materials that are manufactured out of country as the shipping ports across the country have seen large cutbacks and if the ports are not capable of receiving materials this will also impact construction starting in summer and later 2020.

RESNET has issued temporary guidance allowing HERS raters to do virtual HERS inspections and insert default values instead of onsite testing for airflow, ventilation, building air leakage, and duct leakage. This could be an option for energy code compliance.

The question was discussed if this would be a good time for education of the builders, building officials and others to learn building codes, building science practices and other focus areas of efficient buildings.

In Nevada Randy Lavigne is retiring from AIA Nevada. AIA national has cancelled the national conference as has regional training for architects. The questions with the state are the ability to provide trainings for the architects where past events have been held in northern and southern parts of the state.

### **The Electrification Discussion (Minute 45:20 in the video recording)**

Tom discussed the background for the electrification discussion and why this is now being discussed in Nevada. Matt Walker was unable to attend because of a medical item. Background: in 2019 session AB54 was the high efficiency lighting standard, SB254 put in place to measure carbon on an annual basis and reduce carbon over several years 28% reduction by 2025 and zero carbon by 2050. Education started in 2019 in partnership with Governor's Office of Energy with zero energy homes, electric vehicle, heat pumps.

Heat pumps are prevalent in buildings for many years; think the refrigerators in buildings. Water heating continues to be a large use in homes at 18% of energy consumption. Conversations have been happening with Matt Walker about heat pumps, utility programs across the country and opportunities for Nevada. Shaunna shared some details of a change to the 2021 IECC where water heaters must have horizontal space of 3 ft x 3 ft, this allows a house to support either a heat pump water heater or a natural gas water heater providing flexibility for builders to offer additional options to the first buyer of the house.

### **Training Opportunities – (Minute 1:13:30 in the video recording)**

Robin Yochum indicated that GOE is anticipating cities and counties to skip the adoption of the 2021 IECC and adopt the subsequent 2024 IECC. It's unknown at this time the level of local adoption, but the state will move forward with updating to the 2021 IECC after publication by ICC. For fiscal year 2021 there are no specific plans for training at this time, but GOE would like to support and partner. As far as funding with the state budget needs, they are unsure of any training funding.

The DOE field study will be providing training for the state during phase 2 of the project. Les said he received good feedback from EduCode and the three days of energy trainings at the institute this year. Les is optimistic the energy track can move to five days of the weeklong code training event. Tom including some ideas of indoor air quality specialized trainings in the state in the future.

### **Nevada Governor's Office of Energy Report – (Minute 1:26:30 in the video recording)**

GOE hopes everyone is staying healthy and the office would like to help where possible (the financial situation was discussed in previous section). Robin Yochum also mentioned as a teaser the state is talking about the energy code college and will bring this to the stakeholders at the next coalition meeting.

### **Utility and Legislative Update – (Minute 1:27:30 in the video recording)**

Tom shared home some past legislation is driving the discussions today for buildings and electric vehicles. SCR1 directed a study, one item that asked for incentivizing solar onsite generation, microgrids. The link to SCR 1 can be found at: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/Bill/6238/Text> . Since Commercial PACE was implemented there has been minimal movement at the city level. The Clean Energy Fund could be a potential avenue for recovery dollars in Nevada.

### **Wrap Up**

Doodle Poll to help select a date for the next meeting in **July or August 2020**. Please go to the following link and select dates that work for your schedule:

<https://doodle.com/poll/m2yvyz2rzwb52mf24>