

Building Energy Code Working Group Final Report, Nov. 15, 2025

House Energy & Digital Infrastructure Committee

January 8, 2026

Rep. Scott Campbell, BECWG Chair

Background

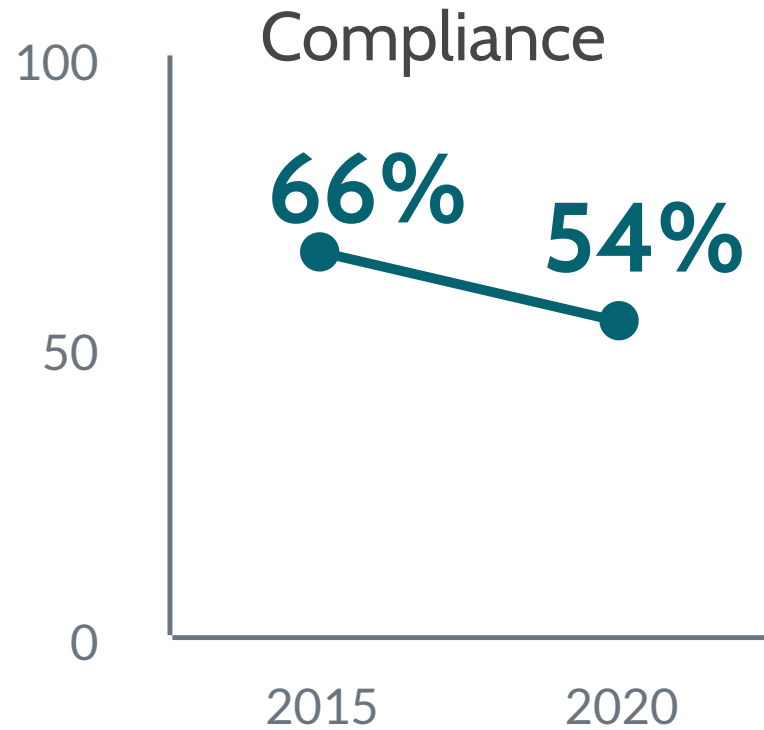
- VT Bldg Energy Standards **mandatory** (RBES: 1997; CBES: 2007)
 - No enforcement, no effective penalty, little administrative support
 - No residential building construction code
 - Div. of Fire Safety administers Fire & Building Safety Code in public bldgs
- Off-session working groups 2019, 2023, 2024, 2025
 - General support for enforcement; opposition from Admin & smaller bldrs
- Residential Contractor registry (Act 182 2022)
- Climate Action Plan: Pathway & Strategy

2025 BECWG: Members

- House: Rep. Campbell
- Senate: Sen. Bongartz
- PSD: Energy Div. Asst. Director
- DFS: Executive Director
- EVT: Energy Code Specialist
 - Also BED & VGS
- AIA-VT: President
- VBRA: Past President
- AGC: Executive Director
- VLCT: Executive Director
- RPCs: Representative
- VHCB: Asset Director
- OPR: Director
- Realtors: Public Policy Director

Building Energy Code Study Committee

Final Report, November 2023



Code Compliance Study Single-Family New Construction

By consultants under PSD contract,
January 2023



2025 BECWG: Legislative Directive (Act 151 2024)

- Recommend strategies and programs to increase awareness of and compliance with the RBES and CBES, including the use of appropriate certifications for contractors trained on energy codes;
- Develop plans and recommendations for a potential transition to a comprehensive program for RBES & CBES at Div. of Fire Safety, including potential funding sources; and
- Consider whether or not the State should adopt a statewide building code.

2025 BECWG: Major Recommendations

- Designate DFS as “authority having jurisdiction” for RBES/CBES
 - Buildings under their jurisdiction now, all bldgs by 2030 – with resources
- Support code compliance with funding from RGGI –
 - Staffing & technical consulting
 - Improvements to Contractor registry
 - Consumer-oriented website, marketing
- Set up Task Force to support Contractor registry (tech & logistics)
 - Voluntary certifications – identifying, vetting credentials

2025 BECWG: Technical Recommendations

- Future energy codes: Use model codes with minimal changes
- Centralize compliance certificates at DFS (now in town records)
- Make “Energy Module” training relevant to trade/profession
- Consider adding ventilation testing to energy codes

Previous Recommendations

2024 BECWG; 2023 BECSC (Act 47 2023)

	2023	2024	2025
DFS as AHJ for RBES/CBES	✓	✓	✓
Code compliance: EEU role, incentives; '25:RGGI	✓	✓	✓
Adopt residential building code	✓	✓	
Advisory group, Task Force to support DFS, OPR	✓		✓
Registry: RBES certification, website, marketing	✓	✓	✓
Centralize compliance certificates	✓	✓	✓
Expand & incentivize training (“Energy Module”)	✓		✓
Clarify municipal authority	✓		

2025 BECWG: Strategies NOT recommended

(for-against-abstain)

- Adopt residential building construction code by date certain (4-5-2)
- Give municipalities explicit authority to enforce energy code (3-6-2)
- Utilize EEU expertise to support energy code compliance (5-6-3)
- Continue including VT energy goals in RBES/CBES updates (2-4-7)
- Credentials, not simply registration, for Contractor registry (vote NA)

Next Steps

Two bills in process:

- Voluntary compliance
 - Adopt residential building code only for buildings in DFS jurisdiction
 - Establish Task Force to assist OPR/DFS on Contractor registry updates and voluntary certifications
- Enforcement
 - Adopt residential building code only for buildings in DFS jurisdiction
 - Establish Task Force to navigate transition of energy code authority to DFS

Governor Scott's Executive Order 06-25

“Promoting Housing Construction & Rehabilitation”

- Allows use of *either 2024 or 2020* RBES/CBES
- Directs LURB to permit 2020 Stretch Code on Act 250 projects
- “The Department of Public Service, in coordination with other relevant state agencies, shall continue trainings and **encourage voluntary compliance with the 2020 or 2024 building energy standards.**”

Governor Scott's Executive Order 06-25

... But energy codes are mandatory

30 VSA § 51 (b) Adoption of Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES).
Residential construction shall be in compliance with the standards adopted by the Commissioner of Public Service in accordance with subsection (c) of this section [describing Revision and Interpretation].

Attorney General Formal Opinion 2025-01, 11/20/25

This Office has concluded that the provisions related to wetlands and building energy standards are lawful to the extent they instruct agencies to begin rulemaking. **To the extent they intend to announce new legal standards different from those in statute or current rule, they exceed the Governor's authority.**

Governor Scott's Executive Order 06-25

Current status

- VT Builders & Remodelers Association requests “safe harbor” provision added to statute
- PSD filed rulemaking 12/9/25
- SoS filed hearing notice 12/31/25
 - Hearing 2/2/26, Public comment deadline 2/9/26