

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

House Energy & Digital Infrastructure Committee

January 8, 2026

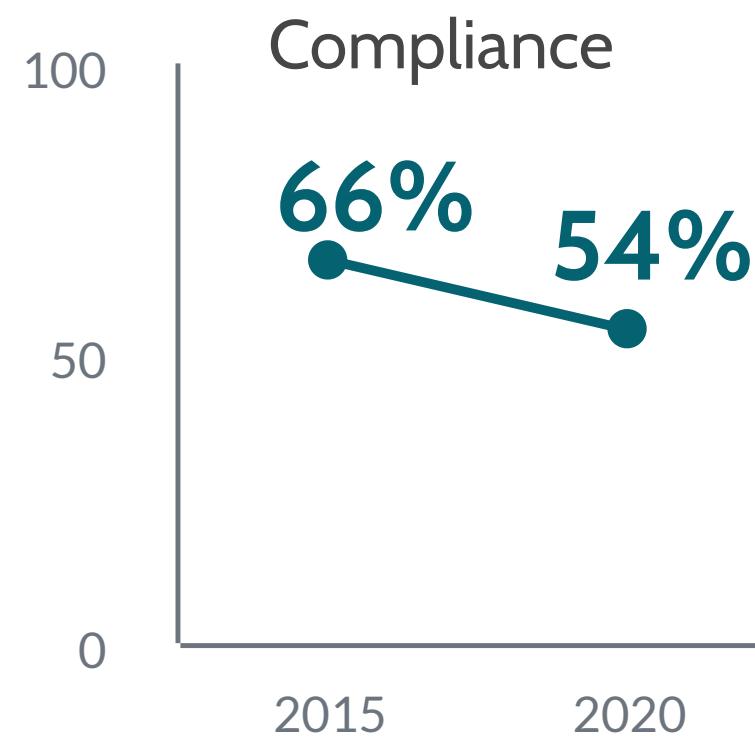
Rep. Scott Campbell, BECWG Chair

# 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



Code Compliance Study  
Single-Family New Construction  
By consultants under PSD contract,  
January 2023

## Building Energy Code Study Committee

Final Report, November 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 Strech 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