



» NEEA Builds Market Capacity Enabling More Energy-Efficient Codes

More stringent energy codes and product standards represent significant long-term energy savings potential for the Northwest. The 6th Power Plan estimates that more than 40 percent of Northwest energy efficiency savings within the next 20 years will come from increased codes and standards.

Raising the bar for energy codes in new buildings ensures that they will use significantly less energy over their lifetimes than older construction. Despite the energy savings potential, one of the biggest barriers to adopting better codes is the concern that it will drive up construction costs or even damage the real estate market.

NEEA and the region's utilities mitigate these concerns by preparing the market for these changes through NEEA's many voluntary market-based initiatives like Northwest ENERGY STAR® Homes. These voluntary initiatives, which are developed with the partnership and support of Northwest utilities, build the market's capacity to apply more energy-efficient construction techniques. NEEA can then effectively demonstrate the market's "readiness" for upgraded codes and show that they won't negatively impact the market or raise construction costs. NEEA also provides ongoing training and support to help ensure compliance once the code is adopted.

NEEA negotiates a higher standard for Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes

When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) launched the national ENERGY STAR Homes program, residential building codes in Oregon and Washington already exceeded the standards for national certification. While successful in other parts of the country, the national program for ENERGY STAR homes was not a good fit for the Northwest.

NEEA, with support from its utility partners, led negotiations with the EPA in 2003 to establish the Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes specification, which requires ENERGY STAR homes built in the region to exceed state building codes for energy efficiency by at least 15 percent.

NEEA increases market capacity to build and verify more energy-efficient homes

NEEA officially launched the Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes program in May 2004, and by the end of 2007 nearly 600 builders signed on to the new program. In addition, NEEA has helped educate and train professionals across the region to test and verify the energy performance of homes. All these efforts continue to build regional momentum for Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes.

NEEA Success Story: Codes

» NEEA'S UNIQUE VALUE

REGIONAL ADVANTAGE

Because NEEA leverages the market power of 12 million energy consumers, we were able to work with the EPA to develop a higher regional specification for Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes.

ACCELERATING MARKET ADOPTION

NEEA worked with builders and energy efficiency professionals to increase voluntary adoption of the Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes standard. Improved codes in all four states ensure that all new homes will now meet this higher standard.

FILLING THE PIPELINE

NEEA continues to support the next generation of improved codes.

Market capacity boosts support for state-wide code changes

In 2009, at the request of Governor Kulongoski, the Oregon state senate passed a bill to reduce building energy consumption by 15 percent. The Oregon Department of Energy prepared a residential code change proposal that was based directly on the successful Northwest ENERGY STAR Home specification. A 15 percent code increase is perceived as large—and therefore politically explosive—but the existence of hundreds of ENERGY STAR homes built by major Oregon builders made it difficult to argue that the requirements for such houses were beyond the capabilities of the Northwest market.

In the Northwest, 2010 was a banner year for codes progress. Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington adopted new residential or commercial codes that will increase energy efficiency by 10 to 20 percent. NEEA played a key role in these code adoptions with strong support from utilities. To help states implement the aggressive code changes, NEEA provided training and education in urban and rural communities across the region, working with utility and state partners. More than 4,000 building officials, architects, engineers, builders and subcontractors participated—a record-breaking participation level for the region.

How NEEA Works

- We build and leverage relationships to influence the energy efficiency market (utilities, regulatory agencies, EPA, builders, energy efficiency professionals)
- We deliver education and training to expand market capacity to deliver and maintain energy-efficient products, services and practices (enlist and train both builders and professionals to implement, test and verify energy efficiency)
- We advance adoption and implementation of increasingly efficient energy codes and standards to lock in long-term savings (influence the building code in Oregon, Washington and the national model code, which is adopted by 35 states including Idaho and Montana)



Maximizing energy efficiency in partnership with:

