

Building Code Requirements

Issue Overview

Building codes and standards are designed to set a baseline for construction to protect the health and safety of the building's occupants. They are typically developed at the national level by non6n2 0 612 792 reWWWWWWWW7b1ed q

more stringent building codes for new homes are purported to be the answer. This approach unfairly burdens new construction and often does little to meet the intended goals. For example, requiring new homes to meet stringent energy-efficiency goals can price many potential home buyers out of the market and compel them to stay in older, less efficient homes. At a minimum, federal policies and programs need to provide sufficient flexibility and incentives so the intended results can be met with minimal negative impacts.

To provide such flexibility, legislation was passed in 2017 to clarify that any reference to “the latest published code” should be interpreted to mean either of the two most recent editions, plus allow for state and local amendments. Unfortunately, that language expired in 2022. Equally problematic, more recent legislation uses the lure of federal dollars to pressure state and local governments into implementing unnecessary energy efficiency policies and regulations, which will drive up housing prices across the country. Together, this wave of federal initiatives and the growing stringency of building codes is making it harder to provide affordable housing.

Solutions

