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**Beware of Harmful Provisions in the Climate Change Taskforce Report**

**In early December, the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change issued a** [120-page report](https://climatechange.wi.gov/Documents/Final%20Report/USCA-WisconsinTaskForceonClimateChange_20201207-LowRes.pdf) **outlining several suggested changes to address the issue of climate change. The task force was established by Governor Tony Evers and Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes on October 17, 2019 as part of** [Executive Order #52](https://evers.wi.gov/documents/eo/eo052-climatechange.pdf)**. Originally the taskforce was charged with providing a list of policy recommendations by August 31, 2020 but that deadline was pushed back due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 32-member task force met between December 2019 and October 2020 prior to issuing their report.**

The Executive Summary of the report states “the recommendations found in this report are intended to lay the foundation for the state to better adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change, while also seeking economic opportunities in renewable energy and conservation.”

**The topic that we have the most interest in is item number 12; Updated State Commercial and Residential Building Energy Codes. The report states that** Wisconsin should adopt the most current energy code without amendment (unless specific provisions are not feasible or cost-effective in Wisconsin) and should establish a process for more regularly updating the state code to align with the model code.

When looking at the one- and two-family building code, the Uniform Dwelling Code Council (UDC Council) has always looked to national building codes when updating the code. That has been the process for code review since the early 1980s. Some items in the national code work in Wisconsin, others may not. A group of builders, inspectors, and materials supplies have been charged with making those decisions via the UDC Council.

Why would we want to blindly accept all the provisions of a national code without amendment? Remember, the national codes that are referenced do not come from the federal government or any government agency but from a private company that profits on the sale of code books.

Provision number 12 goes on to suggest these legislative changes:

1. Regularly updating the state energy codes based on model codes, including for EV readiness, unless specific provisions in the model codes are not feasible or cost-effective in Wisconsin
2. Updating the state energy codes beyond generally accepted model codes if it is feasible and cost-effective to do so in Wisconsin
3. Allowing local communities to implement their own ordinances that are more stringent than the state energy codes so long as they clearly provide how to comply with the state and local codes.

**I would argue that this provision is already being followed and that the one- and two-family building code is already being updated and all relevant codes are looked at when those reviews are taking place. Also, without any change, the UDC Council can now accept what energy code works best in Wisconsin.**

**One provision that would take Wisconsin backwards is allowing local units of government to exceed the statewide and uniform energy code. Unlike many other states, Wisconsin has a had a statewide and unform one- and two-family building code since 1979. Having uniformity allows both the builder and the homeowner to know exactly what the building code will be whether you build in La Crosse or Oshkosh. Allowing local units of government to break the uniformity of the energy code would create a patchwork of different codes that change depending on what city, village, or town you choose to build in.**

**Having a conversation about what uniform one- and two-family energy code works best in Wisconsin is a conversation worth having. As of 2015, Wisconsin has 1,852 separate municipalities (towns, villages, and cities). Allowing for 1,852 different energy codes to build a new home is a step backwards that will increase the cost of housing for families in Wisconsin.**