



City of Grand Rapids, Michigan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROSALYNN C. BLISS
MAYOR

August 26, 2020

Michael J. Pfeiffer
SVP, Technical Services
International Code Council
Central Regional Office
4051 Flossmoor Road
Country Club Hills, IL 60478
mpfeiffer@iccsafe.org

Dear Mr. Pfeiffer,

The City of Grand Rapids, Michigan is proud to have participated with more than 1,000 government representatives across the U.S. in voting to improve the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) by 10%. The IECC serves as the basis for Michigan's building energy code as it does for nearly every state and because buildings account for nearly 40% of U.S. energy consumption and climate emissions, this vote was extremely important to us. In our Strategic Plan, which was passed in April 2019, we committed to reducing carbon emissions and increasing climate resiliency by reducing the carbon footprint of City operations, working to achieve our 100% renewable energy goal for municipal facilities, and creating and supporting programs and policies to reduce carbon emissions from the building sector throughout the community.

The approved 2021 improvements have the opportunity to reduce millions of tons of carbon while reducing energy bills for tenants, homeowners, local governments and business owners. The City of Grand Rapids is especially interested in the first-ever, ready-made optional appendices that can be adopted by state or local jurisdictions that want to achieve zero energy buildings sooner.

One of our key action steps to achieve our desired outcomes was to fully participate in the IECC voting process. As Mayor, I personally voted, and our Office of Sustainability coordinated very closely with our Building Inspections to ensure all eligible voting members were fully informed on the voting process and issues. The Office of Sustainability evaluated all of the proposed energy efficiency and renewable energy revisions and provided a full overview report of their recommendations to all twelve of our IECC voting members.

The International Code Council (ICC) should not reject thousands of online votes cast for the proposals that improve efficiency by interested parties such as the City of Grand Rapids. The Validation Committee Report already determined the votes should count. The ICC also should not dismiss votes made by IECC eligible voting members that do not directly enforce codes. Mayors, other city elected officials, Office of Sustainability personnel and other municipal staff are very engaged in carbon and energy reduction policies and procedures.

It is due to the fact that buildings account for nearly 40% of carbon emissions that a variety of municipal stakeholders intentionally engaged in the IECC voting. All of these staff meet the existing definition of a “voter.” Finally, the ICC should uphold the voter approved proposals requiring additional electrical outlets near gas-fired appliances to allow homeowners the ability to switch to electric and requiring new commercial and residential buildings provide space for electric vehicle charging.

The IECC is important to our City’s policies, impacting the affordability, resilience, sustainability, and safety of our buildings. We see and are working to address the impacts of the energy codes daily. ICC’s online voting process allows us to participate more fully in I-Codes and have all of our voices and votes counted in a manner that does not take away from our daily responsibilities. The City may not have the resources or time to be able to send our representatives to vote in person, but that inability does not take away our desire to participate, nor does it decrease our understanding of the impact and importance of I-Codes.

In support of City of Grand Rapids leadership and transformation efforts, sustainability is a keystone value in all our efforts, especially supporting code changes that support energy conservation in the built environment. We also support ICC leaders, members, and code officials’ efforts toward improving codes that affect owners, developers and occupants within the built environment in accordance with currently approved ICC by-laws. We encourage ICC leadership and appeals process to function in accordance with ICC by-laws and for code development to be for the betterment of humanity.

We feel strongly that ICC’s Online Voting process not only allows ICC’s Governmental Members to participate more fully in the I-Code Development Process, but that broader voting participation by officials who don’t have a vested financial interest in the outcome enhances the legitimacy of the final I-Codes. We believe the code is stronger because of the breadth of participants in the process and we look forward to continuing to take part.

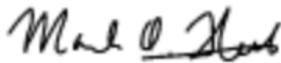
Sincerely,



Rosalynn Bliss
Mayor
City of Grand Rapids



Alison Waske Sutter
Sustainability and Performance Management Officer
City of Grand Rapids



Mark Fleet
Building Official
City of Grand Rapids

Cc: Greg Wheeler, CBO President, ICC (gwheeler@iccsafe.org)
Dominic Sims, CEO, ICC (Dsmis@iccsafe.org)