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Building Codes Division seeks input on “Reach Code”

Code to provide stronger standards for energy-efficient buildings

(Salem) — The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services Building Codes Division is developing a new code that will help contractors build with greater energy efficiency.

Senate Bill 79, passed by the 2009 Legislature, requires the division to adopt a “Reach Code,” which will be an optional code containing more stringent standards for energy efficiency than the mandatory building code. When contractors choose to build to the Reach Code, building departments must accept the construction the same as if it was built to the mandatory code.

“The Reach Code will allow contractors to go above and beyond the current standards for energy efficiency without having to go through an alternative method for approval,” said Patrick Allen, administrator of the Building Codes Division. “It is one of many efforts by Oregon to make ‘green building’ easier and quicker.”

The base document for the Reach Code will be the 2012 International Green Construction Code. The division is collecting proposals for adding Oregon-specific amendments to the base code through May 7, 2010; it expects to adopt the code by April 1, 2011.

An advisory committee will meet throughout the next year and help develop the code. Committee members are Bill Clemens, a building inspector from the city of Corvallis; David Cohan, Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA); Seda Collier, a plan reviewer from the City of Eugene; Joe Esmonde, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 48; Jon Gray, Plumbers and Steamfitters, Local 290; Franko Martinec, an electrical engineer for the Port of Portland; Tom Payne, a residential contractor; Kate Turpin, a mechanical engineer from SERA Architects; Rob Yorke, a commercial contractor; and Jim Denno, Oregon Department of Energy.

To submit a proposal for the Reach Code, use the form, available at <http://www.bcd.oregon.gov/pdf/2652.pdf>, and send it to Dana.C.Fischer@state.or.us. To follow the work of the advisory committee, sign up for e-mail updates at <http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd/committees/11reachcode.html>.

Other Building Codes Division initiatives to promote green building and sustainability include setting statewide standards for designing and installing electric vehicle charging stations, developing a first-in-the-nation statewide solar installation code, and facilitating the installation of rainwater harvesting and gray water reuse systems.

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