

The 
Compliance Project

A Nationwide Initiative to Speed
the Implementation of Energy Codes

Newsletter • February 2016

If you were among the nearly fifty professionals that joined us from across the country for the first Habitat X webinar of 2016, *Programs and Codes That Work*, you likely confirmed your suspicions – compliance with energy codes in most jurisdictions is far, far below what it should be. (View or download [the slide deck](#).)

Consumer Outreach. You may have also learned how The Compliance Project will help address the problem. Beginning in February, we will engage homeowners on the issue through select social media outlets. With scandals in the transportation sector [in recent focus](#), we plan to provoke similar inquiry into how new homes often “cheat” their occupants when it comes to energy codes – and subject them to greater energy, health, and environmental costs than they bargained for. Our outreach will direct readers to resources that help them understand how code compliance fits into the purchase and maintenance of their homes.

Professional Support. The Project is working to support our professional allies by developing brandable media kits, such as the CodePlus Builders Package, that can be shared with local homebuilders, building officials, and trade associations. We’ve gotten solid response from many of you about this concept, and so we’ll fast-track the effort to provide these kits within the next few months.

Programs That Work. We also heard from [Chandler von Schrader](#) of EPA during the January webinar. He brought the potentially good news that EPA is set to re-launch the program known as ESVI (ENERGY STAR Verified HVAC Installation) in Spring 2016. With utility organizations as local partners, and a simplified program based on ACCA standards, ESVI will leverage data streaming from increasingly available smart systems embedded in HVAC equipment to remotely evaluate the installation and ongoing performance of HVAC systems.

ARRA is Back. Those of you who stayed for the second half of the webinar gained some fresh knowledge about a decidedly un-fresh piece of legislation. As expert [Ryan Boswell](#) explained, upon accepting funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, governors of all 50 states were required to demonstrate 90% compliance with 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) by 2017. While more stringent codes have since been adopted in some states, the 2009 IECC’s enclosure-integrity requirements were a major leap forward.

With reported compliance with energy codes varying from 20-80% in the various states, things clearly have not gone as planned. It also doesn’t help that no one seems to know what happens if the ARRA-mandated targets aren’t met (one webinar participant suggested that these ARRA commitments could provide states with another tool to implement the Clean Power Plan). Whatever happens, this is an issue you can expect us to follow closely. (Read Ryan’s article about the 2017 ARRA deadlines [on the Resource Page](#).)

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Follow-On Responses. Several questions were raised by webinar participants, including these:

- Q: What about the joint HUD-USDA determination (May 2015) that [new homes constructed with FHA-insured mortgages must meet the 2009 IECC](#). A: *This will impact the minority of states that have not already adopted these codes, affecting about 18,000 housing units annually, according to HUD.*
- Q: Do the early results from DOE's *Residential Energy Code Field Study* differentiate homes that meet code from homes built to a higher standard such as ENERGY STAR? A: *The study, currently in its first of four years, does not appear to make this important distinction.*
- Q: Is the Compliance Project allied with regional trade groups (such as <http://www.selacaci.org>) who are picking up some slack in energy code education in laggard jurisdictions? A: *Yes we're working these alliances diligently. Our work plan includes efforts to profile and promote outstanding contractors in the coming months.*

Next Webinars. We're honored to be working with all of you toward solutions for some of the most persistent issues facing the high-performance construction industry. And we glad to say there's more to come: over the upcoming months, we'll host five more one-hour webinars in a series exploring the core topics of the [2016 Habitat X Strategic Plan](#). (Learn about [The Evolving Role of Gas and Electric Utilities](#)).

Learn More. If you'd like to stay connected to this initiative, [go to our home page](#) and be sure you've signed-up for our newsletter. There's also a survey on that page we hope you'll fill out to tell us more about your observations, interests, and capabilities.

If you'd like to take a deep dive on any of these topics, and connect with some of the most forward-looking professionals in the home performance industry, you should consider attending the 2016 Habitat X Summer National Conference this June 27-29 at Big Sky Montana. ([Learn about Summer National](#).)

If you have ideas for content in the next newsletter, or if you'd like to contribute to our ongoing media campaign, contact newsletter editor Griffin Hagle, or project advisors Chris Dorsi and Colin Genge.

Best regards,

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