



# Shaping Tomorrow's Built Environment Today

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Ginger Scoggins  
2023-2024 ASHRAE President

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February 20, 2024

The Honorable Rob Cowles  
The Honorable Eric Wimberger  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy  
2 East Maine Street  
Madison, WI 53707

Re: Senate Bill 777 “creating a stretch energy code.”

Dear Chair Cowles and Vice Chair Wimberger:

I am writing on behalf of ASHRAE, the American Society of Heating Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers, to **support Wisconsin Senate Bill 777**, titled “creating a stretch energy code” that sits before you in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. ASHRAE, founded in 1894, is a global professional society of more than 53,000 members, including more than 800 in Wisconsin, that focuses on building systems, energy efficiency, indoor air quality, resiliency, and sustainability. Through our research, standards writing, publishing, certification, and continuing education, ASHRAE shapes tomorrow’s built environment today.

Senate Bill 777 would, if enacted, begin the process of creating a stretch energy code that local governments could choose to adopt. The first step in this process, as mandated by state law, is the creation of a working group in the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. This legislation lays out the creation of the working group, sets a timeline for them to finish their work, and subsequently allows localities to adopt the stricter stretch energy code if they so choose. Allowing municipalities to voluntarily adopt a stretch code instead of adhering to a top down ‘one size fits all’ energy code would provide greater flexibility for jurisdictions that wish to take advantage of additional energy efficiency gains and other sustainability measures, along with the subsequent cost savings that these improvements would provide.

Strong energy codes and standards are a crucial tool for addressing climate change and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings and their heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration systems directly and indirectly contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings are responsible 40% of our nation’s energy use, and 35% of our nation’s carbon emissions.<sup>1</sup>

We recommend that ASHRAE standards inform the creation of a stretch energy code for Wisconsin, and we offer ASHRAE’s technical expertise in this process. We note that Wisconsin currently uses an outdated version of ASHRAE’s commercial building energy standard, the 2013 edition of [ASHRAE Standard 90.1, Energy Standard for Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings](#). Additionally, Wisconsin does not adopt the 2021 International Green Construction Code (IgCC) which is powered by the 2020 edition of [ANSI/ASHRAE/ICC/USGBC/IES Standard 189.1, Standard for the Design of High Performance Green Buildings](#). As the technical authority on HVACR and building systems, we urge the

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<sup>1</sup> NREL researchers reveal how buildings across United States do—and Could—Use Energy. (n.d.). News | NREL.  
<https://www.nrel.gov/news/features/2023/nrel-researchers-reveal-how-buildings-across-the-united-states-do-and-could-use-energy.html#:~:text=Buildings%20are%20responsible%20for%2040,buiding%20stock%20is%20also%20essential>.

use of these standards in the creation of a stretch energy code for Wisconsin. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that an engineer be included in the working group that will establish the stretch code so that this individual may offer technical, science backed expertise to the industry thought leaders that this legislation otherwise calls for on the working group.

If Wisconsin were to adopt an up to date version of ASHRAE's commercial energy standard, we would expect to see billpayers in the state save over \$800,000 in the first year, and over \$340,000,000 over 30 years, all while *lowering average commercial construction costs*.<sup>2</sup> These savings would be amplified if the IgCC was adopted as well. A stretch code that could be adopted locally would therefore allow municipalities to avail themselves to the economic and environmental benefits of modern standards *if they wish to do so*, while also allowing jurisdictions where an update does not make as much sense to hold the course.

On behalf of our more than 800 members in Wisconsin, thank you for your consideration of ASHRAE's comments in support of Senate Bill 777.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ginger Scoggins', written in a cursive style.

Ginger Scoggins  
ASHRAE President

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<sup>2</sup> Tyler, M., Xie, Y., Poehlman, E., & Rosenberg, M. (2021). *Choose an item. Cost-Effectiveness of ANSI/ASHRAE/IES Standard 90.1-2019 for Wisconsin*. [https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/Cost-effectiveness\\_of\\_ASHRAE\\_Standard\\_90-1-2019-Wisconsin.pdf](https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/Cost-effectiveness_of_ASHRAE_Standard_90-1-2019-Wisconsin.pdf)