

NYS Building Code comments 2/28/2025
Barton H. Schoenfeld, MD, FACC

Hello! I'm Bart Schoenfeld. I'm from Valatie, about 25 miles southeast of Albany. I'm a board certified cardiologist, and I'm on the board of directors of New York State Physicians for Social Responsibility.

I'd first like to congratulate this commission for all the work that's been done on this draft code. There's a lot here that I'm sure will improve the health of New Yorkers.

As a physician, I'm very much aware of the health hazards related to the combustion of natural gas indoors. As you know, cooking on gas stoves has been shown to be the cause of almost 20% of childhood asthma in New York State. That's a major cost to our health care system, as well as a psychological and financial burden to affected families. Electrification will markedly improve this problem.

The health effects of climate change are also of concern. Without going into great detail, they range from the direct effects of extreme weather, to less obvious issues such as water-borne illnesses and the spread of insect-borne disease, the effects of wildfire smoke, and much more. Buildings are the largest source of greenhouse gas emission in New York and electrification is a great step towards reducing emissions, and will undoubtedly lead to improvements in public health

For these reasons and more, I'm glad that the code update requires all-electric new construction.

I'm also gratified to see a section on demand response controls. Here's a minor example: I'm an EV owner, and NYSEG now has a program with EV.energy that allows my car charging to proceed only during off-peak hours. It makes no difference to me, and it's been saving me money! It's clear to me that the requirement for demand response controls will reduce strain on the grid.

The transportation sector is the second largest source of GHG in our state, accounting for about 28% of emissions. The uptake of electric vehicles continues to increase, and that will clearly improve that number. I'm concerned however that EV charging infrastructure readiness has been moved to the appendix, and I believe that it should be in the body of the code. It would be

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much less expensive to plan and install charging infrastructure upfront during new construction, and would remove an impediment to EV uptake. Placing it in the appendix is a gift to the fossil fuel industry, limits the uptake of EV's, and actually encourages the use of internal combustion engines. I want to point out that EV infrastructure readiness is part of the Climate Action Council Scoping Plan Key Strategy B1, and NY Energy law 11-104(6)(a) requires the Building Code Council to update the energy code as identified by the Climate Action Council. I hope you can put this requirement back in.

Thanks for allowing me to present my opinions!