

February 23, 2022

Dear members of the House Climate & Energy Finance & Policy Committee,

On behalf of AIA Minnesota's architects and design professionals, we would like to offer our support for HF 831, which modifies the commercial energy code adoption process.

Minnesota's architects are committed to slowing the impact of climate change, promoting the economic growth of our state, and providing public and private entities with the necessary tools to create a more resilient future for our built environment. Allowing cities the option to adopt the most current commercial energy codes will set Minnesota up for a bright future with better air quality, greater disaster resilience, and a supportive environment for the intersectionality of racial, social, and climate issues for all Minnesotans. We know there are Minnesota cities ready to lead and HF 831 would give them the ability to do so.

In the course of our work, we've learned that changes to building envelope, mechanical systems, site orientation, and more can make a dramatic difference in the energy efficiency of a project. Minnesota's architects are already putting these strategies to use for their clients but allowing cities to accelerate the pace of review of Minnesota's energy code will help us translate that success even further into the private sector. Today's baseline code building is tomorrow's energy assistance request. If Minnesota does not create space for more rapid updates to commercial building energy standards, we are setting ourselves up to pay more for our buildings in the future through costly retrofits and increasing energy assistance funding needs.

Allowing cities to adopt a commercial energy code that keeps pace with advancements in design and technology would help provide a clear pathway to energy efficient buildings for everyone. The data and experience of the cities that choose to lead the way will help inform the statewide process, giving more communities the opportunity to improve quickly. These energy code advancements will also bring new opportunities for jobs and training for the skills that will keep Minnesota's design, contracting, building trades, and engineering professions vital in the decades to come.

While AIA Minnesota would prefer to see the statewide commercial energy code process accelerated to produce the broadest benefit, allowing cities to opt in will still result in positive climate impacts for all of Minnesota. This bill will have a significant positive impact on our built environment and the lives of Minnesota residents. AIA Minnesota respectfully requests that you vote yes on HF 831.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alicia Belton". The script is fluid and cursive.

Alicia Belton, FAIA, NOMA
President, AIA Minnesota

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary-Margaret Zindren". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Mary-Margaret Zindren
Executive Vice President, AIA Minnesota