



TO: Town Meeting Members, Town of Milton
FROM: Alex Hasha
Climate Action Planning Committee Chair
Board Member, Sustainable Milton
DATE: April 28th, 2024

I'm writing on behalf of Sustainable Milton's board and Milton's [Climate Action Planning Committee](#) to ask for your support for Article 37 adopting the Specialized Building Code.

The Specialized Building Code is a targeted set of code updates designed to align with [Massachusetts's plan](#) to reduce climate-warming pollution in time to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

- It applies **only to new buildings** and **does not affect additions and renovations** to existing homes.
- It would ensure that all **new buildings are constructed sustainably with an eye towards reducing climate impacts**.
- It **preserves homeowners' flexibility** for present and future energy needs, and
- **protects them from costly energy retrofits** down the road, and finally
- helps **qualify the town to receive state grants** to support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Climate change threatens our childrens' future: the chance of dire impacts for humanity increases rapidly unless we dramatically reduce fossil fuel emissions by 2050. Massachusetts is leading the way to meet this challenge with practical solutions, and has legally committed to achieve "net-zero" emissions by 2050. Achieving this goal requires starting now with technologies available today, so Massachusetts's strategy relies on promoting energy efficiency and "electrification": transitioning from fossil fuels to electricity for heating, cooking, and transportation.

Adopting the specialized building code is a critical piece of the puzzle. Buildings produced 45% of Milton's emissions in 2022. This specialized code will help us stop adding to the problem by incentivizing all-electric construction and lowering costs for fossil-fuel buildings to convert to electricity in the future.

At a high level, the incremental requirements in the updated specialized code are:



1. **Pre-wiring:** new buildings using fossil fuels must have adequate electric service and dedicated circuits for electric heating, hot-water, cooking, and electric vehicle charging.
2. **Solar:** new buildings using fossil fuels must install a certain amount of onsite solar to offset emissions and lower energy costs for residents.
3. **Better Energy Efficiency for Large Single-family Homes:** New homes greater than 4,000 square feet must be all-electric or certified zero energy (i.e., using solar to offset energy usage)
4. **Exemplary Performance for Large Multi-family:** New multi-family homes greater than 12,000 square feet must use Passive House compliance pathways (highly efficient by design).

While town meeting members adopted Milton's current Stretch Code in 2010, enabling us to become a state-certified Green Community and garnering over \$1 million in grant funds towards municipal improvements, we recognize this is a relatively new topic for most of us. So, to support an informed discussion at Town Meeting, we want to provide the resources we have researched and presented at a public forum and multiple public meetings in recent months.

- [Presentation materials from public forum](#)
- [Point by point response to the warrant committee's recommendation](#)
- [5 -minute overview video](#)
- [15-minute presentation](#) (the same material that was presented at the [public forum](#) on April 4th)
- A longer listing of public presentations and related resources is available on the town's website: <https://townofmilton.org/1145/Stretch-Energy-Codes>

If you have questions, please share them with our [Q&A form](#) and we'll do our best to address them. When you've had a chance to consider, I hope you'll conclude, as we have, that supporting this article is the right choice for Milton. Responding to climate change with appropriate urgency does have risks and challenges, but the risks of inaction are even more serious. Later may be too late.

Sincerely,

Alex Hasha

Alex Hasha
Climate Action Planning Committee Chair
Board Member, Sustainable Milton