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**Council Members:** Kjell Anderson, Jay Arnold, Todd Beyreuther, Justin Bourgault, Tom Handy, Angela Haupt, Roger Heeringa, Tye Menser, Benjamin Omura, Peter Rieke, Katy Sheehan, Dan Young.

**Ex-Officio:** Lorin Lathrop, John Lovick, Alex Ramel, Suzanne Schmidt, Shelly Short.

**Building, Fire, Residential and WUI Codes (BRFW) Committee:** Roger Heeringa, Chair, Daimon Doyle, Dan Young, Todd Beyreuther, Angela Haupt, Katy Sheehan.  
[sbcc@des.wa.gov](mailto:sbcc@des.wa.gov) (Submitted Electronically)

RE: Joint Stakeholder Letter on Embodied Carbon Proposal 24-GP-118-R4/BRFW Version for Comment

We write this letter to express our concerns and opposition to the committee's current proposal 24-GP-118-R4 (the proposal) to adopt a new embodied carbon appendix to the 2024 International Building Code. As leading industry trade associations and professional organizations in Washington state, we have come together out of our mutual interests to do what is best for Washington's built environment and our shared environmental stewardship goals.

The Proposal is outside the scope of what the Washington State Building Code Council (SBCC) is equipped to establish and regulate regarding codes and standards, and more importantly Embodied Carbon Reduction is not a matter of Health and Safety as set forth by [RCW 19.27.020](#).

We maintain that embodied carbon reduction is not a health, life and safety concern for building occupants. This was made clear in a recent unanimous decision by the International Building Code (IBC) Council during their hearing of the same proposal that the SBCC is currently considering here in Washington. We echo some of the notable comments of the IBC members below. A full recording may viewed as linked below<sup>1</sup>.

**Some key takeaways from IBC council member testimony are:**

- Terminology within the proposals is not consistent with the building code.
- The council did not agree that the IBC is suitable for setting GWP limits, these limits do not belong in IBC but do belong in a green code.
- Addressing GWP belongs in International Green Construction Code (IgCC), with further commentary noting that the IBC committee does not have ability to understand or the expertise to evaluate this proposal and the information.
- Several Council members indicated significant changes are needed, definitions are not consistent, there is random info on distances, and lacking thorough stakeholder input which did not take place, etc.
- There is a gap in the training component and expectations for the building official(s) and the local municipalities who wish to adopt this, and this proposal does not consider that.
- There are substantial scoping issues and scope creep, which was a primary concern of committee chair, Gary Lewis.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdpassess.com/videos/8273/>

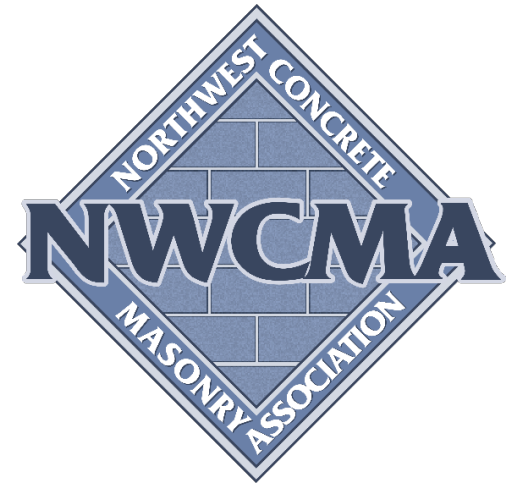
Additionally, to reference [RCW 19.27.032 \(d\)](#) “The council may adopt or amend the state building code or code sections at any time pursuant to legislative direction as reflected in legislation signed into law.” There is currently no law that directs the SBCC to adopt embodied carbon reduction provisions in the building codes. The study that was conducted for the State Building Code Council per the proviso in Section 151 (15) in the 2024 Supplemental Operating Budget ([Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5950](#)), did not extend authority to the SBCC for code adoption, but instead gave leave for SBCC’s contracted researchers to make recommendations for *potential* language for *legislature* to consider. It would then be up to legislature to determine if further authority is warranted that would then provide for potential further direction to the SBCC. It is critical to note that not only was impacted industry not involved in the discussions of that study as directed by the statute, but their comments were simply attached as an appendix. This prevented industry from providing solutions and having meaningful impact on the recommendations to the legislature that would have direct impacts on their sectors. The legislature also considered [HB 1458](#), which would have required the SBCC to adopt embodied carbon emissions reduction standards, but it did not pass this year.

We believe that further Embodied Carbon study and data gathering needs to take place with the [2ESHB 1282](#) EPD working group as authorized by Legislature. This working group along with the Department of Commerce is tasked to examine the EPD process for each building material in relation to Washington State and the unique importation and resource procurement challenges this state faces, as well as examining financial impacts to business and the code adopting entities. We believe this research has the potential to generate a closer look at the actual opportunities Washington has, through thoughtful and collaborative discussions between industries and interest groups. The recommendations of this working group may lead to the State following pathways already set forth such as adopting the International Green Code Council (IgCC) or following the lead of Cal-Green and or a combination of other ideas as we see in industry specific codes.

Aspirational carbon reduction goals are a procurement matter and should be contained within a separate Green Code and overseen by a separate Green Code Council similar to how this issue is addressed in other jurisdictions. Innovations in the carbon reduction lane are moving faster than policy can adapt to and keep up with. Therefore, Washington needs a more flexible, fluid and expertly driven pathway in this dynamic area of the built environment. The state should move toward a system that incentivizes and encourages carbon reduction and innovation, which can and is being done within the design build process already. Numerous projects support the idea that when open discussions are held and guidance and education are supported, these projects meet or exceed their own carbon reduction goals without the need for archaic and restrictive regulations or mandates that divert Building Code Officials attention away from health and safety issues. We believe it is a futile effort to try and fix something that is unworkable, and it is dangerous to place bad policy into permanency and this Proposal is steering the State in the wrong direction.

There is no reason why this proposal should be moving forward and the SBCC has every ability to stop it where it sits. This proposal is flawed and exclusionary of industry expertise and input. It would be better for the Commerce group to proceed and the legislature to direct either the SBCC or a new green code council to adopt embodied carbon provisions that include industry experts earlier in the drafting process. Therefore, our conclusion is that the current efforts of the SBCC to push the proposal forward are premature and we ask that the proposal be dropped from consideration by the BRFW Committee and the SBCC. We are prepared to discuss realistic solutions, and we look forward to working with our partners in industry, stakeholders, and various interest groups in an inclusive and proactive format as we all seek to achieve the goal of global embodied carbon reduction in the built environment.

Sincerely,



For questions, please call:

Cory LeeAnn Shaw

*Executive Director*

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