



Florida Building Commission  
Energy Technical Advisory Committee

November 28, 2018

**RE: Petition for Declaratory Statement No. DS 2018-072**

Dear Chairman Smith,

We write to express concerns with the Petition for Declaratory Statement No. DS 2018-072 filed by the Palm Beach County Building Code Advisory Board and published in the Florida Register on October 1, 2018.

The Florida Building Commission establishes thermal efficiency requirements for replacement systems or components, and those requirements have historically applied regardless of whether the cost of the work is over 30 percent of the assessed value of the building. This has been standard practice and in most parts of the state, is not controversial.

Interpreting the statute and the Florida Building Code such that the thermal efficiency requirements would not apply unless the cost of the work is over 30 percent of the assessed value of the building would be a substantial and detrimental decision. For a typical \$200,000 home, a renovation would have to cost at least \$60,000 to trigger this requirement. That's an incredibly substantial investment, and one which no single equipment or window replacement job would hit on its own.

While some types of equipment listed in Section R 501.7 are covered by federal appliance and efficiency standards and would presumably be held to a minimum efficiency standard, there are other replacement systems and components which are not, most notably windows. Approximately 1 million windows are replaced each year in Florida. If those replacement windows were not required to comply with the Florida Building Code, the window market could be flooded with low-cost, inefficient windows that, in some

cases, could perform worse than the windows being replaced. This would in turn raise utility bills, increase peak demand on the energy grid, and increase pollution from power plants.

Furthermore, this type of change would set up a poor precedent for improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings. Existing buildings are responsible for about 40 percent of carbon pollution emissions. Provisions like those found in Section R501.7 help reduce pollution emissions of existing buildings, therefore making the air and water cleaner and contributing to better health and comfort for Floridians. At a time when we collectively need to be *increasing* energy efficiency and *reducing* energy use, changing this requirement to be more lenient for existing buildings – especially when most existing buildings in Florida have complied for years with no issue – is truly a step in the wrong direction.

We appreciate your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Urbanek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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