

## **Be Prepared For Energy Code Changes**

Last year, BIAW members waged a major battle to stop onerous changes to the Washington State Energy Code. While BIAW, with the help of local HBA's and association members succeeded in modifying some of the energy code proposals, the State Building Code Council (SBCC) still adopted sweeping changes to the energy code. Collectively, the new provisions could increase the cost of a new home by \$10,000 or more.

BIAW is hopeful a legal challenge will be successful in delaying or stopping the most restrictive part of the energy code. However, builders should be prepared to comply with the new energy provisions slated to take effect July 1. To help educate builders to the new energy code, as well as the differences between the 2006 IRC and 2009 IRC, BIAW is preparing to hold code classes starting in early spring. Stay tuned for a schedule of upcoming building code classes.

Listed below are the major changes adopted this year to the Washington State Energy Code. For a complete listing of all the changes or a copy of the new energy code, contact [Eric](#) at BIAW. A copy of the energy code is available online at: [\(Here\)](#)

- **Additional Energy Efficiency Requirements**—Builders must pick up one credit from a set of upgrades to the building envelope, HVAC equipment, water heater, improved air leakage control, or the inclusion of renewable energy. A one point credit is available for homes less than 1,500 square feet meeting certain specifications, while a one point debit is incurred by homes exceeding 5,000 square feet.
- **Increased Building Envelope Stringency**—Component and rigid envelope mandates for structures such as walls, windows and ceilings demand higher R and U-values.
- **Duct Placement and Testing**—Ducts must be leak tested, using new maximum leakage rates. Envelope insulation is not permitted to be displaced by ducts in exterior walls, floors, or ceilings. Building cavities are not allowed to be used as ducts.
- **Air Leakage Testing**—Blower door testing is required in all residential buildings and structures.
- **High Efficiency Lighting**—Fifty percent of all lighting fixtures must be high efficiency fixtures.