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Historic Increase for Energy Efficiency in Buildings Nationwide Homeowners Set to Benefit from Lower Utility Bills

(Charlotte, NC) – Code officials from across the nation voted today to increase energy efficiency standards in new buildings by nearly 30%. This historic vote represents the largest increase in building code efficiency since 1975. The code, called the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is used in forty-seven states and the District of Columbia.

“Global Green USA is thrilled that officials from around the country have voted in favor of energy efficiency, cost savings for homeowners, and a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from the building sector,” said Mary Luevano, Policy and Legislative Director for Global Green USA. “This is a win for the American people.”

Nationwide, buildings use 70 percent of our total electricity and 40 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing energy efficiency in new buildings is the low hanging fruit of the energy efficiency movement.

“This was a goal three years in the making,” said Ronald Majette, Project Manager for RND Energy Codes for the U.S. Department of Energy. “We are ecstatic.” The officials voted in favor of proposals that will increase efficiency through tighter and more insulated heating and cooling ducts, better and more efficient lighting, properly sized equipment in homes, and better insulation. Taken together, the initiative achieves a model code that is around 30% more energy efficient than the most recent version of the model code, updated in 2009. The officials also voted against several proposals from the Homebuilder lobby that would have rolled back existing energy provisions.

“The most important energy policy vote in the country this year occurred today in Charlotte, North Carolina,” said Chris Mathis of Mathis Consulting based in North Carolina. “All Americans will benefit from these minimum energy code advancements for decades to come.”

Global Green USA is the only national environmental group headquartered in greater Los Angeles, and has offices in Washington D.C., New Orleans & New York. Global Green is the US affiliate of Green Cross International, founded by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993. Global Green is a national leader in advocating for smart solutions to global warming, including green building for affordable housing, schools and communities, as well as advancing groundbreaking solar, green building and energy efficiency legislation in California, other states and at the national level.

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The building code officials voted on over 170 proposals relating to various parts of the energy code. Global Green took a position on almost every one of these proposals, as part of a wide ranging coalition called the Energy Efficiency Codes Coalition (EECC). The comprehensive energy proposal that the EECC submitted would have increased efficiency standards by over 30% in one sweeping measure; unfortunately, this measure failed. However, through approving a series of individual proposals submitted by the EECC, the officials still approved an efficiency increase of close to 30%.

“Code officials today passed measures that increase energy efficiency and will save on electricity, gas, and fuel oil bill for people across the U.S.,” said Steve Rosenstock, manager at Edison Electric Institute. Edison Electric Institute is a coalition of utility companies from across the country.

California does not use the IECC, instead opting for more stringent energy efficiency standards under Title 24. However many building officials from California came to North Carolina to vote, in order to impact the national standards and lead the county in energy efficiency.

“The vote today in Charlotte represents an unprecedented gain in efficiency,” said Harry Misuriello, outreach coordinator of the Energy Efficient Codes Coalition. “Local governments clearly realize that they have an important stake in efficiency, and that’s why they sent their delegates here to Charlotte to vote for greater efficiency.

Every three years, the International Codes Council (ICC) develops the standards used in construction of residential and commercial buildings. The 30 Percent Solution 2012 proposal was developed and submitted by the Energy Efficient Codes Coalition (EECC). Statewide and national supporters of the proposal include National Low Income Housing Coalition, the American Values Network, The U.S. Conference of Mayors, The Sierra Club, The Southeast Efficiency Alliance, Global Green USA, The American Chemistry Council, and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO).

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