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Oregon advances energy efficiency with new building code *Commercial energy code is among strongest in nation*

(Salem) — Commercial buildings in Oregon will become even more energy efficient as the result of a new energy code adopted this week by the Department of Consumer and Business Services Building Codes Division.

The 2010 Oregon Energy Efficiency Specialty Code for commercial buildings, effective July 1, will achieve a 15 percent reduction in energy use in new commercial construction.

“Oregon’s new energy code furthers our position as a national leader in sustainability and climate change policy,” said Governor Kulongoski. “Developing strong energy-efficiency standards for buildings is important because buildings consume about 40 percent of our energy supply.”

Oregon already is ranked third in the nation for building code energy efficiency and fourth for overall energy efficiency policy and programs, according to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE).

The 2010 energy code will further improve energy efficiency in buildings by making changes in three main areas:

- Requiring increased insulation and higher performing windows
- Adding automatic lighting controls
- Requiring more efficient mechanical systems such as higher efficiency furnaces

Oregon’s new energy code is based on the 2009 model national code; some of Oregon’s 2010 amendments have been proposed for inclusion in the 2012 national model code.

The energy-efficiency improvements were driven by Senate Bill 79, proposed by the Governor and passed by the 2009 Legislature. In addition to increasing the energy efficiency in commercial construction, SB 79 directs the Building Codes Division to develop a set of optional construction standards that go beyond the mandatory requirements of the Energy Code. Work to develop this optional Reach Code is under way.

The 2010 Oregon Energy Efficiency Specialty Code is available at:
http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd/committees/10cec/20100113_DRAFT_OEESC_with_OR_Res.pdf

To learn more about the development of the optional Reach Code go to:
<http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd/committees/11reachcode.html>

Other Building Codes Division initiatives to promote energy efficiency and sustainability include setting statewide standards for designing and installing electric vehicle charging stations, developing a first in the nation statewide solar installation code, and facilitating the installation of rainwater harvesting and gray water reuse systems.