

North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
Mr. Chris Austin, Director of Rental Investment
3508 Bush Street
Raleigh, NC 27609

Dear Mr. Austin & NCHFA,

We would first like to thank and congratulate NCHFA for taking such a positive step towards improving the minimum energy efficiency standards in the proposed 2021 QAP by moving to the new ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction Certification Program. This is definitely a great move and will result in better, more energy efficient properties for developers, as well as for the future tenants of these properties. We would also like to thank NCHFA for the opportunity to provide feedback on NCHFA's Draft 2021 QAP. We appreciate NCHFA's collaborative and inclusive approach and respectfully offer the following comments and recommendations.

In addition to requiring all new construction projects to certify to ENERGY STAR's Residential New Construction program, we encourage projects to also consider the usage of the U.S. DOE Zero Energy Ready Home program. We would like to share information on how DOE Zero Energy Ready Home is perfectly aligned with the mission of the North Carolina Housing Finance Authority (NCHFA) to provide efficient, healthy, durable, safe, and future ready housing that helps to ensure truly affordable housing for low-income residents of North Carolina. This can be achieved by incentivizing ZERH certification for single and multifamily construction within the criteria for the QAP. We would like to extend an offer to provide additional training and resources, either for your staff or developer partners, to increase understanding of program requirements and the benefits of participation.

Zero Energy Ready Homes represent the federal government's most rigorous guidelines for energy efficiency and performance, including comprehensive health protection during these extraordinary times. Since 2013, the Zero Energy Ready Home program has grown to over 6,000 certified homes and has doubled in certifications in four out of the last five years. This includes over 1,500 homes certified during the first six months of 2020. This growth trend supports what we have believed since the beginning of the program, that Zero Energy Ready Homes are the future of the home building industry. Residents in North Carolina want and deserve a better living experience in their homes and developers and builders across the country are starting to realize that this program offers that experience.

Zero Energy Ready Home certification can be achieved independently or in conjunction with multi-attribute green building certification programs, like Enterprise Green Communities Plus and Passive House. In fact, Zero Energy Ready Home certification is a pathway within these green rating systems. By recognizing DOE Zero Energy Ready Home specifically in the next QAP, the NCHFA would offer flexibility for developers while still ensuring advanced verified performance of buildings within the agency's portfolio. We recommend further energy efficiency measures, including high performance building envelope criteria and specifications for equipment efficiency.

DOE's Zero Energy Ready Home team can be a true resource for the State of North Carolina on energy efficiency. Our team members would be extremely happy to discuss any of the above details and provide additional training and resources, either for your staff or developer partners, to increase understanding of program requirements and the benefits of participation. Please do not hesitate to contact me by email at Terrence.mosley@ee.doe.gov or phone (601-594-8997) to discuss further.

Sincerely,
Terrence Mosley
DOE Residential Buildings Integration Program Office
Zero Energy Ready Home Program