Resolution No. 3

Date: 10/3/2024
City: San Antonio, TX

NAHB Resolution

Title:	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Sponsor:	Climate Risk and Sustainability Committee Construction, Codes & Standards Committee Environmental Issues Committee
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WHEREAS, greenhouse gases (GHG), including carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxides, and fluorinated gases (all of which can collectively be referred to as carbon, carbon emissions, or CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e) emissions), are emitted from many sources and are considered to have long-term impacts on the climate;

WHEREAS, addressing climate change has been made a national priority, centered around a goal of reducing GHG emissions and reaching zero GHG emissions overall in the United States by 2050;

WHEREAS, GHG emissions from buildings are typically divided into two categories:

1. Operational emissions, which include the direct and indirect consumption of energy to power the home's operations and can be reduced by increasing the energy efficiency of buildings or using renewable energy sources; and
2. Embodied emissions, which include the energy consumed during the extraction, manufacturing, transportation, and installation of materials for construction and can be reduced by selecting materials with a lower carbon impact, optimizing building design, and decreasing construction waste;

WHEREAS, according to 2022 data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), buildings account for 31 percent of total operational U.S. GHG emissions and residential buildings account for approximately half of those emissions (including emissions associated with the generation of electricity used in buildings);

WHEREAS, 2020 data from the U.S. Census and the U.S. Energy Information Administration show that more than 90 percent of U.S. housing stock was built prior to 2010 (113 million out of 123 million housing units inclusive of single-family and multifamily);

WHEREAS, the energy efficiency of model energy code requirements for new residential construction has improved nearly 40 percent during the past two decades, making new homes responsible for significantly lower operational emissions than most of the existing housing stock;

WHEREAS, conventionally constructed low-rise residential buildings typically have the lowest Embodied Carbon Emission Intensity (ECEI) (a measure of the amount of GHG emissions associated with a unit of material) of all construction types;

WHEREAS, while a life-cycle assessment (LCA) can be used to estimate the total GHG emissions over the life of a new home, there is no broadly accepted standard method to do so for residential buildings, and the science of quantifying the embodied emissions for many building products continues to evolve;

WHEREAS, although builders and designers can impact the operational and embodied emissions of new homes, the extent of these emissions is largely determined by others including manufacturers, the supply chain, homeowners, tenants, and the utility grid;

WHEREAS, despite the limited opportunities for the residential new construction market to significantly reduce overall GHG emissions, many governmental bodies are taking action such as adopting more stringent building energy codes and standards, mandating climate-related documentation and disclosures, and restricting the use of certain fuel types or construction materials;

WHEREAS, each of these impacts could change how new homes are constructed and financed, thereby increasing costs and putting housing further out of reach for the average American household; and

WHEREAS, decarbonization strategies that address GHG emissions from other economic sectors, such as transportation and electricity generation, and upgrading the existing housing stock are most likely to be more efficient and effective in reducing GHG emissions with fewer impacts on consumers,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) urge lawmakers, regulators, and other policymakers, when considering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions, to focus resources and attention on the largest emissions sources and simplest and most cost-effective reductions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB urge lawmakers, regulators, and other policymakers seeking to regulate or limit operational or embodied GHG emissions in residential construction to demonstrate that such policies are effective without compromising:

1. The affordability, attainability, and durability of the home;
2. Energy supply reliability and affordability; and

3. Home design choices based on climate zone and/or market availability of building materials and fuel type;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB urge lawmakers, regulators, and other policymakers to support energy codes, standards, and other policies that justify tradeoffs between embodied and operational GHG emissions impacts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB urge standards development organizations responsible for developing model energy codes to consider the possible adverse impacts of more stringent energy efficiency provisions on embodied GHG emissions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB support programs and policies that provide information, resources, and incentives to upgrade the existing housing stock, both individually and at the community scale, to reduce its overall GHG emissions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB support renewable energy generation from all sources, sites (including onsite and offsite), and methods (including community- and utility-scale) as well as other energy sources that reduce GHG emissions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB urge manufacturers to develop more accessible and understandable information on the GHG emissions and other environmental impacts of their products; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB support continuing research regarding cost-effective carbon reduction strategies across all economic sectors and educating NAHB members and other industry stakeholders about voluntary approaches to reducing GHG emissions in residential construction.

Leadership Council Action:	Approved
Resolutions Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Custom Home Builders Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Housing Finance Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Construction, Codes & Standards Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
State and Local Government Affairs Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Climate Risk and Sustainability Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Buildings Systems Council Board of Trustees Action:	Recommends Approval
NAHB Remodelers Board of Trustees Action:	Recommends Approval
Single-Family Builders Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Federal Government Affairs Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Environmental Issues Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Design Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Multifamily Council Board of Trustees Action:	Recommends Approval