

Issue brief

AIA MA Priority Level

This is a High Priority bill

The Ask

Ask your legislator to support these bills

For more information

John Nunnari
617-901-4685
jnunnari@architects.org

The Massachusetts Chapter of the
American Institute of Architects
290 Congress Street, Suite 200
Boston, MA 02210

HB 764/SB 2090 – An Act Incorporating Embodied Carbon into State Climate Policy

Sponsors: Rep. Michelle Ciccolo/Senator Joanne Comerford

Purpose

These bills are designed to comprehensively address the issue of embodied carbon emissions in the construction industry. They establish the Embodied Carbon Advisory Board (ECAB) and outline critical provisions to promote transparency, sustainability, and emissions reduction throughout the lifecycle of buildings and infrastructure.

The proposal begins by providing clear definitions for essential terms like “embodied carbon,” “Environmental Product Declaration” (EPD), and “Lifecycle Assessment” (LCA), setting the foundation for its objectives. It mandates the creation of the ECAB, comprised of representatives from various sectors, including engineering, architecture, construction, housing, and state agencies. This board is tasked with overseeing and guiding efforts to reduce embodied carbon emissions in the industry. To support the ECAB’s work, the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience will provide funding and staffing resources.

The bills also call for a comprehensive assessment of industry practitioners’ knowledge regarding embodied carbon, with recommendations for educational improvement. Furthermore, the Commonwealth will establish guidelines and best practices for measuring and reducing embodied carbon in collaboration with the ECAB. These guidelines extend to infrastructure projects and encompass lifecycle analysis, emissions benchmarking, and environmental product declarations for building materials. Additionally, the proposal authorizes incorporating provisions related to embodied carbon into the state’s energy code, ensuring that emissions reduction measures are integrated into building practices.

Finally, the proposal outlines specific timelines for various actions, including the appointment of ECAB members, the issuance of guidelines, and the submission of a report detailing policy mechanisms for reducing embodied carbon and integrating it into the state building code.

Comments

If signed into law, would this affect the professional practice of architecture in MA? If so, how?

While these bills would not directly affect the professional practice of architecture, by updating the state building energy code, these bills will advance architectural best practices – promoting embodied carbon literacy, increasing the demand for architectural expertise, and supporting service and product innovation through measurement and reduction of operating energy, correlating operating carbon, and finally embodied carbon. At the same time, these bills will help to curb embodied carbon emissions this decade, which climate scientists warn is crucial to achieving reductions to avoid the most severe climate impacts.

