

NMHC/NAA Viewpoint

The apartment industry promotes green building codes and standards that are technologically feasible, cost effective and reflective of the uniqueness of multifamily construction and maintenance. Currently, the apartment industry supports the National Green Building Standard as the most appropriate performance benchmarking system for apartment properties.

More than 19,000 apartments have been certified under the National Green Building Standard.

GREEN BUILDING CODES

Governments at all levels—federal, state and local—are implementing sustainability initiatives as part of the global shift to making communities more resource efficient. To further advance these efforts, many are looking to enact mandatory green building requirements as part of their building codes or as prerequisites for various government programs. Unfortunately, many of these jurisdictions are mandating compliance with building codes that were not designed for apartment construction or have not been vetted by a standards-setting organization.

The apartment industry has long been committed to developing robust tools to help apartment community owners and managers improve the environmental performance of the nation's apartment stock. The industry actively promotes the use of numerous green building programs and standards, participates in national code and standard committees and conducts industry-specific education and outreach.

While the apartment industry supports voluntary, cost-effective and technologically feasible improvements to building environmental performance, some proposed changes to existing building codes and regulations fail to address the unique nature of multifamily construction and maintenance. Green building initiatives that add significant costs and create technical problems for apartment owners trying to comply can cause housing costs to rise and can exacerbate rental housing shortages in many communities.

Given these issues, the apartment industry believes the National Green Building Standard (NGBS) is the most appropriate performance benchmarking system for residential construction, including apartments. The NGBS was developed to be compatible with the national model building codes and has been approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), signifying that the standard was developed through a rigorous process requiring public input, a diversity of participants and due process. It is a better suited alternative for federal agencies and local jurisdictions considering green initiatives than non-standardized green rating systems, such as the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program.