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**Advocacy Digest | August 26, 2020**

**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change targeting building codes**

In October of 2019, Governor Tony Evers announced the formation of the [Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change](https://climatechange.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx) and made Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes chair.

The task force has been meeting via Zoom over the past few months and has also created subcommittees to address specific issues. Recently, the “Subcommittee on Energy, Housing and Infrastructure” met and a number of subcommittee members and guests advocated for Wisconsin to accept the latest version of the one- and two-family building and energy codes.

On August 26, the subcommittee approved a narrower request that both the one- and two- family and commercial building code requires the installation of electric vehicle charging outlets in new buildings but the general consensus still supports the broader mandate to update all codes to the most recent IRC/ICC version.

The installation of a hardwired level two-car charging station can add as much as $3,000 to the cost of a new home. As you may know, NAHB has been actively challenging the ICC process that allows this and several other provisions in the 2021 IRC to be added back into the code after initially being defeated.

The Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change is scheduled to make recommendations to Governor Evers on this topic no later than October 31, 2020 which could then be introduced as a bill or as part of the upcoming state budget.

We continue to monitor the activities of the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change while working with NAHB code staff on data to push back against initiatives that will increase the cost of housing.

**Stand up for Housing by contributing to the BBW PAC**

To make sure our voice is heard during this election cycle, we are asking members to contribute to the Building A Better Wisconsin Political Action Committee (BBW-PAC).

We are in the process of reaching out directly to members to make a contribution to the BBW-PAC or to use existing funds from the Builders Direct Fund (BDF Conduit) to fund the BBW-PAC or to use those funds to support pro-housing candidates and political committees.

To date, these efforts have contributeb over $5700 from the BDF Conduit to candidates and political committees and to fund the BBW-PAC with over $4400 in additional contributions. A special thank you to the La Crosse Area BA efforts to raise additional BBW-PAC funds during their annual golf event and to the Brown County HBA staff for working with members with existing dollars in the BDF Conduit to help fund housing candidates and the BBW-PAC.

**Masks mandatory as of August 1**

With the release of [Executive Order 82](https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/EO082-PHECOVIDSecondSpike.pdf) that created another public health emergency, all Wisconsinites are required to wear a mask in public places as of August 1, 2020.

Once this executive order was issued, we established a [webpage](https://mailchi.mp/wisbuild.org/wba-takes-action-in-response-to-covid-2777400) with additional information and answers to questions received from members.

Finally, on August 25 the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) filed a [lawsuit](http://www.will-law.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/complaint-final_redacted.pdf) in Polk County Circuit Court against Governor Tony Evers for violating state law by declaring a second public health emergency on July 30. State law forbids a governor from unilaterally extending a public health emergency beyond 60 days or skirting the law by declaring multiple 60-day emergencies for the same crisis.

For more information on the WILL lawsuit [click here](https://www.will-law.org/will-sues-governor-evers-over-second-covid-19-emergency-declaration/).

**From NAHB: New Home Sales Surge to 13-Year High**

In a sign that the housing market continues to lead the economy during the coronavirus outbreak, sales of newly built, single-family homes rose in July to its highest pace since 2006. Sales increased 13.9% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 901,000 units, according to newly released data by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Census Bureau. The July rate is 36.3% higher than the July 2019 pace. New home sales are up 8% on a year-to-date basis.

“This is exactly what NAHB’s builder confidence survey has been indicating in recent months. Consumers are being driven by low interest rates, a growing focus on the importance of housing and a shift in buyers seeking homes in lower density areas,” said NAHB Chairman Chuck Fowke, a custom home builder from Tampa, Fla. “Despite these positive conditions, affordability challenges remain especially as builders are dealing with building cost increases, including a dramatic rise in lumber costs in recent months.”

“New home sales are benefitting from the suburban shift, as prospective buyers seek out affordable markets in order to obtain more residential space. Moreover, sales are increasingly coming from homes that have not started construction, with that count up 34% year-over-year,” said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. “In contrast, sales of completed, ready-to-occupy homes are down almost 24%. These measures point to continued gains for single-family construction ahead.”

A new home sale occurs when a sales contract is signed or a deposit is accepted. The home can be in any stage of construction: not yet started, under construction or completed. In addition to adjusting for seasonal effects, the July reading of 901,000 units is the number of homes that would sell if this pace continued for the next 12 months.

Inventory fell to a four-month supply, with 299,000 new single-family homes for sale, 8.8% lower than July 2019. The current supply is the lowest since 2013. Of the inventory total, just 61,000 are completed and ready to occupy. The median sales price was $330,600, up from $308,300 a year earlier.

Regionally, on a year-to-date basis, new home sales were up in all four regions: 21.7% in the Northeast, 20.4% in the Midwest, 4.8% in the South, and 8.7% in the West.

For more, visit nahb.org.