**Template for Existing Building Reach Codes Model Ordinance Language**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE [GOVERNING BODY]**

**OF THE [CITY/TOWN/COUNTY] OF [JURISDICTION]**

**AMENDING [IDENTIFY SUBPARTS, INCLUDING CHAPTERS, DIVISIONS, ETC.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ AND \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OF THE [JURISDICTION] CODE] TO ADOPT A LOCAL “REACH” CODE AND ADOPTING FINDINGS JUSTIFYING THE LOCAL AMENDMENTS TO THE [2025 CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS CODE AND THE 2025 CALIFORNIA ENERGY CODE]**

**WHEREAS,** California Health and Safety Code section 17958 requires that cities adopt building regulations that are substantially the same as those adopted by the California Building Standards Commission and contained in the 2025 California Building Standards Code; and

**WHEREAS,** the 2025 California Energy Code is Part 6 of the 2025 California Building Standards Code which implements minimum energy efficiency standards in buildings through mandatory requirements, prescriptive standards, and performance standards; and

**WHEREAS,** California Health and Safety Code Sections 17958.5, 17958.7 and 18941.5 provide that the [Jurisdiction] may make changes or modifications to the building standards contained in the 2025 California Building Standards Code based upon express findings that such changes or modifications are reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological or topographical conditions; and

**WHEREAS,** human activities that release greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere contribute to the increase of the worldwide average temperature, drought conditions, and duration of fire seasons; and

**WHEREAS,** according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, nine of the ten largest wildfires in California history have occurred since 2017, destroying nearly 10,000 structures and burning of more than 4.5 million acres; and

**WHEREAS,** the [Jurisdiction] is situated along a wildland-urban interface and as a result is extremely vulnerable to wildfires and firestorms; and

**WHEREAS,** this Chapter is reasonably necessary because of health and safety concerns as [Jurisdiction] residents suffer from asthma and other health conditions associated with poor indoor and outdoor air quality exacerbated by the combustion of methane gas; and

**WHEREAS**, removing gas appliances from indoor environments reduces the risk of asthma associated with gas appliances, and removing combustible gas from structures aids in fire hardening and removes a known hazard during firefighting efforts; and

**WHEREAS,** on or about September 20, 2016, the State of California enacted Senate Bill (SB) 32, which added Health and Safety Code Section 38566 to require greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to 40 percent below 1990 levels by no later than December 31, 2030; and

**WHEREAS,** pursuant to Sections 17958.5 and 17958.7 of the Health and Safety Code, the proposed amendments meet the following conditions to demonstrate local amendments are necessary: the changes are substantially equivalent to 2022 code amendment changes, the changes are necessary to align local building codes with General Plan and CAP goals while permitting mixed-fuel residential construction and incentivizing electric construction; and

**WHEREAS,** on [date], the [Governing Body] adopted the [Jurisdiction’s] General Plan which includes [relevant general plan targets and goals such as GHG emissions reductions, efficient buildings]; and

**WHEREAS,** on [date], the [Governing Body] found and determined that amendments to the 2022 Energy Code were cost effective, would result in buildings designed to consume less energy than permitted by previous editions of the Energy Code, and were necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions, and [Governing Body] finds and determines the conditions persist and it is necessary to adopt substantially equivalent amendments to the 2025 Energy Code; and

**WHEREAS,** on [date], the [Governing Body] adopted the [Jurisdiction’s] Climate Action Plan which included [relevant CAP details around green reduction in buildings]; and

**WHEREAS,** consistent with the Climate Action Plan, the local amendments to the 2025 California Energy Code establish requirements for [single-family, multifamily, and nonresidential] structures which will reduce demands for local energy resources, reduce regional pollution, and promote a lower contribution to greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS,** Public Resources Code Section 25402.1(h)2 and Section 10-106 of the 2025 California Administrative Code establish a process which allows local adoption of energy standards that are more stringent than the statewide Standards, provided that a determination that the standards are cost effective is adopted at a public meeting and subsequently filed with the California Energy Commission, and the California Energy Commission finds that the standards will require buildings to be designed to consume less energy than permitted by the 2025 California Energy Code; and

**WHEREAS,** [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] has determined the cost effectiveness studies prepared by the California Statewide Codes and Standards Reach Code Program and associated study data are sufficient to illustrate that the standards contained in this ordinance are cost effective and will require buildings to be designed to consume less energy than permitted by the 2025 California Energy Code; and

**WHEREAS,** the content and details of this ordinance were the subject of a public stakeholder workshop conducted on [Date], which included attendees such as architects, energy modelers, designers, builders, developers, and residents; and

**WHEREAS,** based upon these analyses, the [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] finds that the local amendments to the California Energy Code contained in this ordinance have at least one cost effective pathway; and

**WHEREAS,** scientific evidence has established that methane gas combustion, procurement and transportation produce significant greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming and climate change; and

**WHEREAS,** using electric appliances in buildings fueled by less greenhouse gas intensive electricity is linked to significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions and is cost competitive because of the cost savings associated with avoiding new gas infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS,** the most cost-effective time to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings is during significant alterations and additions, allowing for electrical infrastructure that is installed alongside other significant improvements; and

**WHEREAS**, the local amendments support [Jurisdiction’s] compliance with Bay Area Air District’s amendments to Rule 9-4 and Rule 9-6, which limit the sale of nitrous oxide emitting water and space heating appliances; and

**WHEREAS,** that, pursuant to the Public Resources Code section 25402.1(h)(2) and Section 10-106 of the 2025 California Administrative Code, the [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] finds and determinesthe following: (1) The locally adopted energy efficiency standards contained in this ordinance are cost-effective, and (2) the efficiency standards in this ordinance will require buildings to be designed to consume less energy compared to the 2025 California Energy Code; and

**WHEREAS,** that, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Sections 17958.5, 17958.7 and 18941.5, the [Jurisdiction] finds and determines that amendment and additions to the code are reasonably necessary because of the [Jurisdiction’s] unique local climatic, geologic and topographic conditions ; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED,** by the [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] as follows:

1. Incorporation of Recitals. The foregoing recitals are found to be true and correct, and are incorporated by this reference into this action;
2. Purpose. It is the purpose and intent of this Ordinance to establish standards for [single-family residential retrofits including major additions and alterations] that exceed minimum 2025 Title 24 Part 6 requirements.
3. Adoption. The local amendments to the [chapter, section, or part of local Building Code] as specified below are hereby adopted by the [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] to be codified under [relevant municipal statutes]. The [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] adopts the Recitals herein as separate and additional findings of fact in support of adoption of the ordinance.
4. Severability. If any word, phrase, sentence part, section, subsection or other portion of this amendment or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is declared void, unconstitutional, or invalid for any reason, then such word, phrase, sentence, part, section, subsection, or other portion, or the prescribed application thereof, shall be severable, and the remaining provisions of this amendment, and all applications thereof, not having been declared void, unconstitutional or invalid, shall remain in full force and effect.
5. Findings. The [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] finds that each of the changes or modifications to measures referred to therein are reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions in the area encompassed by the boundaries of the [Jurisdiction], and the [Governing Body] adopts the following findings in support of local necessity for the changes or modifications:
6. [Jurisdiction] is along a wildland-urban interface which experiences more fire fueled by greenhouse gas emissions from humans.
7. [Jurisdiction] has a history of flooding disasters that occurred in YYYY, YYYY, and YYYY and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions will prevent increases in severity or duration of flooding disasters.
8. During flooding events, stormwater inundated the wastewater treatment system in YYYY and YYYY. To the extent that climate change has the potential to make these conditions worse, more restrictive Energy Code requirements to achieve reduced greenhouse gas emissions are necessary.
9. [Jurisdiction] has a history of wildfire disasters that occurred in YYYY, YYYY, and YYYY and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions will prevent increases in severity or duration of wildfire disasters. Therefore, the above-described findings support the imposition of measures to increase the efficiency of existing buildings in the [Jurisdiction] to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
10. Failure to address and substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions creates an increased risk to the health, safety, and welfare of [Jurisdiction] residents.
11. Pursuant to the Public Resources Code section 25402.1(h)(2) and Section 10-106 of the 2025 California Administrative Code, the [Governing Body] of [Jurisdiction] finds and determines the following: (1) The locally adopted energy efficiency standards contained in this ordinance are cost-effective, and (2) the efficiency standards in this ordinance will require buildings to be designed to consume less energy compared to the 2025 California Energy Code.
12. Pursuant to Sections 17958.5 and 17958.7 of the Health and Safety Code, the proposed amendments meet the following conditions to demonstrate local amendments are necessary: the changes are substantially equivalent to 2022 code amendment changes, the changes are necessary to align local building codes with General Plan and CAP goals while permitting mixed-fuel residential construction and incentivizing electric construction.
13. The standards imposed by this Ordinance are necessary because these standards align with the General Plan policy that directs the City to [reduce GHG emissions, improve building emissions, include general plan language here].
14. The standards imposed by this Ordinance are substantially equivalent to changes or modifications that were previously passed by [Governing Body on [adoption date] and previously filed on [filing date] and were in effect as of September 30, 2025.
15. The standards imposed by this Ordinance are necessary because changes to the State code must be made in order to implement the [General Plan, Emissions Reductions Strategy, Air Quality goals, etc.].
16. The standards imposed by this Ordinance are necessary because they meet the policy requirements of [Jurisdiction’s] Climate Action Plan or Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy.
17. The standards imposed by this Ordinance are necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions evidenced above and are cost-effective, as supported by the 2025 Statewide Cost Effectiveness Study prepared by the California Energy Codes and Standards Statewide Utility Program. Specifically, the [Jurisdiction] finds that there are at least [three] cost effective measure packages:
    * 1. Package 1, installing the efficiency measure of R-30 Floor Insulation would save energy relative to the base code and would achieve a benefit to cost ratio of 2.3 on an on-bill basis.
      2. Package 2, installing the efficiency measure of RI-19 Floor Insulation would save energy relative to the base code and would achieve a benefit to cost ratio of 2.3 on an on-bill basis.
      3. Package 3 Package 3 to installing a Heat Pump Water Heater (HPWH), would save energy relative to the base code and would achieve a benefit to cost ratio of 1.6 on a “Long-term System Cost” (LSC basis).
18. CEQA. This ordinance is categorically exempt from CEQA because it is an action taken by a regulatory agency for the purpose of protecting the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15308). In addition, this ordinance is exempt from CEQA under the general rule, 15061(b)(3), on the grounds that these standards are more stringent than the State energy standards, there are no reasonably foreseeable adverse impacts, and there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. The following findings are made in support of these determinations:
19. The purpose of the implementation of a Reach Code is to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the [Jurisdiction] that are produced from buildings.
20. The Reach Code approval process requires that the [Jurisdiction] determines that the local standards will require buildings to be designed to consume less energy than current statewide requirements. Furthermore, the California Energy Commission approval process requires that the [Jurisdiction] make the findings as part of its approval process. Therefore, the Reach Code standards can only go into effect if they protect the environment by making buildings more efficient.
21. .Violations. Violation of the requirements of this Ordinance shall be considered, at the [Jurisdiction’s] election, an infraction of the [Jurisdiction’s Municipal Code] punishable by all sanctions prescribed in [Chapter Y], or an administrative violation punishable as provided under [Chapter X].
22. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective as of January 1, 2026, upon approval of the California Energy Commission, or upon the date the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) accepts the ordinance for filing, whichever is later.
23. Ordinance Summary. A summary of this ordinance, together with the names of [Governing Body] members voting for and against, shall be published at least XX days prior to its final passage, in [local publication], a newspaper published and circulated in [Jurisdiction]. This ordinance shall go into effect at the expiration of [thirty (30) days] after its final passage.

**THEREFORE,**  the Chapter [cite local code section] of the[local jurisdiction municipal/county code], adoption of the 2025 California Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11, is hereby amended to add the following section as mandatory.

**A4.204.1 Energy Efficiency.** Alterations to existing residential buildings shall comply with Section~~s~~ A4.204.1.1 ~~and A4.204.1.2~~.

**A4.204.1.1 Altered Space-Conditioning System Serving Existing Single-Family Dwelling Units – Mechanical Cooling.** When a space-conditioning system serving an existing single-family dwelling unit is altered in climate zones 1 through 14 and 16 by installation or replacement of an air conditioner, the altered system shall comply with either a or b below in addition to the requirements for installation specified by Title 24, Part 6, Sections 150.2(b)1E and 150.2(b)1F:

a. A heat pump shall be the primary heating source and sized according to the system selection requirements specified by Title 24, Part 6 of Section 150.0(h)5. Supplemental heating may be provided by a~~n existing~~ gas furnace or ~~existing~~ electric resistance heating as specified in Title 24, Part 6, Sections 150.0(h)7 and 150.0(i); or

b. An air conditioner shall meet ~~the following~~ all the requirements in either subsection I or II below:

I. Systems with Existing Duct Distribution Systems:

~~I. R-8 duct insulation for ducts located in unconditioned space; and~~

A. ~~II.~~ The duct system measured air leakage shall be equal to or less than ~~5~~10 percent of the system air handler airflow as confirmed through field verification and diagnostic testing, per the requirements in Title 24, Part 6, Reference Residential Appendix Section RA3.1.4.3.1; and

**Exception 1 to A4.204.1.1bIA.** If it is not possible to meet the duct sealing requirements, all accessible leaks shall be sealed and verified through a visual inspection and a smoke test by a certified ECC-Rater utilizing the methods specified in Reference Residential Appendix Section RA3.1.4.3.5.

**Exception 2 to A4.204.1.1bIA:** Existing duct systems, constructed, insulated or sealed with asbestos.

B. ~~III.~~ Demonstrate, in every control mode, airflow greater than or equal to ~~400~~ 300 CFM per ton of nominal cooling capacity through the return grilles, and an air-handling unit fan efficacy less than or equal to 0.45 W/CFM. The airflow rate and fan efficacy requirements in this section shall be confirmed through field verification and diagnostic testing, following the procedures outlined in Title 24, Part 6, Reference Residential Appendix RA3.3; and

**Exception 1 to A4.204.1.1bIB:** Systems unable to comply with the minimum airflow rate and system efficacy requirements shall demonstrate compliance by satisfying all of the following:

1. Following the procedures in Section RA3.3.3.1.5;

2. Installing a system thermostat that conforms to the specifications in Section 110.12;

3. For standard ducted systems (without zoning dampers), meet the applicable minimum total return filter grille nominal area requirements in Table 150.0-B or 150.0-C as confirmed by field verification and diagnostic testing in accordance with the procedures in Reference Residential Appendix Sections RA3.1.4.4 and RA3.1.4.5. The design clean-filter pressure drop requirements specified by Section 150.0(m)12D for the system air filter(s) shall conform to the requirements given in Tables 150.0-B and 150.0-C.

**Exception 2 to Section A4.204.1.1bIB:** Multispeed compressor systems or variable speed compressor systems shall verify air flow (cfm/ton) and fan efficacy (Watt/cfm) for system operation at the maximum compressor speed and the maximum air handler fan speed.

**Exception 3 to Section A4.204.1.1bIB:** Gas furnace air-handling units manufactured prior to July 3, 2019 shall comply with a fan efficacy value less than or equal to 0.58 W/cfm as confirmed by field verification and diagnostic testing in accordance with the procedures given in Reference Residential Appendix RA3.3.

C. ~~IV.~~ In all climate zones, refrigerant charge verification requirements shall meet the requirements in Title 24, Part 6 Section 150.2(b)1Fiib, including the minimum airflow rate specified in Section 150.2(b)1Fiia; and

D. ~~V.~~ Vented attics shall have insulation installed to achieve a U-factor of 0.020 or insulation installed at the ceiling level shall result in an insulated thermal resistance of R-49 or greater for the insulation alone; luminaires not rated for insulation contact must be replaced or retrofitted with a fireproof cover that allows for insulation to be installed directly over the cover; and

**Exception 1 to Section A4.204.1.1(b)ID:** Dwelling units with at least R-38 existing insulation installed at the ceiling level.

**Exception 2 to Section A4.204.1.1(b)ID:** Dwelling units where the alteration would directly cause the disturbance of asbestos unless the alteration is made in conjunction with asbestos abatement.

**Exception 3 to Section A4.204.1.1(b)ID:** Dwelling units with knob and tube wiring located in the vented attic.

**Exception 4 to Section A4.204.1.1(b)ID:** Where the accessible space in the attic is not large enough to accommodate the required R-value, the entire accessible space shall be filled with insulation provided such installation does not violate Section 806.3 of Title 24, Part 2.5.

E. ~~VI.~~ Air seal all accessible areas of the ceiling plane between the attic and the conditioned space including all joints, penetrations and other openings that are potential sources of air leakage by caulking, gasketing, weather-stripping or otherwise sealing to limit infiltration and exfiltration.

**Exception 1 to Section A4.204.1.1bIE:** Dwelling units with at least R-38 existing insulation installed at the ceiling level.

**Exception 2 to Section A4.204.1.1 bIE:** Dwelling units where the alteration would directly cause the disturbance of asbestos unless the alteration is made in conjunction with asbestos abatement.

**Exception 3 to Section A4.204.1.1bIE:** Dwelling units with atmospherically vented space heating or water heating combustion appliances located inside the pressure boundary of the dwelling unit.

II. Entirely New or Complete Replacement Duct Systems:

A. R-8 duct insulation shall be installed for all new ducts located in unconditioned space; and

B. The total duct system measured air leakage shall be equal to or less than 5 percent of the system air handler airflow as confirmed through field verification and diagnostic testing, per the requirements in Title 24, Part 6, Reference Residential Appendix Section RA3.1.4.3.1; and

C. Demonstrate, in every control mode, airflow greater than or equal to 350 CFM per ton of nominal cooling capacity through the return grilles, and an air-handling unit fan efficacy less than or equal to 0.35 W/CFM. The airflow rate and fan efficacy requirements in this section shall be confirmed through field verification and diagnostic testing, following the procedures outlined in Title 24, Part 6, Reference Residential Appendix RA3.3; and

D. In all climate zones, refrigerant charge verification requirements shall meet the requirements in Title 24, Part 6 Section 150.2(b)1Fiib; and

E. In Climate Zones 1-4, 6, and 8-16 if the air handler and ducts are located within a vented attic, vented attics shall have insulation installed to achieve a U-factor of 0.020 or insulation installed at the ceiling level shall result in an insulated thermal resistance of R-49 or greater for the insulation alone; luminaires not rated for insulation contact must be replaced or retrofitted with a fireproof cover that allows for insulation to be installed directly over the cover; and

**Exception 1 to Section A4.204.1.1bIIE:** In Climate Zones 1, 3, and 6, dwelling units with at least R-19 existing insulation installed at the ceiling level.

**Exception 2 to Section A4.204.1.1bIIE:** Dwelling units where the alteration would directly cause the disturbance of asbestos unless the alteration is made in conjunction with asbestos abatement.

**Exception 3 to Section A4.204.1.1bIIE:** Dwelling units with knob and tube wiring located in the vented attic.

**Exception 4 to Section A4.204.1.1bIIE:** Where the accessible space in the attic is not large enough to accommodate the required R-value, the entire accessible space shall be filled with insulation provided such installation does not violate Section 806.3 of Title 24, Part 2.5.

F. In Climate Zones 2, 4, and 8-16, air seal all accessible areas of the ceiling plane between the attic and the conditioned space including all joints, penetrations and other openings that are potential sources of air leakage by caulking, gasketing, weather-stripping or otherwise sealing to limit infiltration and exfiltration.

**Exception 1 to Section A4.204.1.1bIIF:** Dwelling units with at least R-19 existing

insulation installed at the ceiling level.

**Exception 2 to Section A4.204.1.1bIIF:** Dwelling units where the alteration would directly cause the disturbance of asbestos unless the alteration is made in conjunction with asbestos abatement.

**Exception 3 to Section A4.204.1.1bIIF:** Dwelling units with atmospherically vented space heating or water heating combustion appliances located inside the pressure boundary of the dwelling unit.

**Exception 1 to Section A4.204.1.1:** Where the capacity of the existing main electrical service panel is insufficient to supply the electrical capacity of a heat pump and where the existing main electrical service panel is sufficient to supply a new or replacement air conditioner, as calculated according to the requirements of California Electrical Code Article 220.83 or Article 220.87. Documentation of electrical load calculations in accordance with Article 220 must be submitted to the enforcement agency prior to permitting for both the heat pump and proposed air conditioner.

**Exception 2 to Section A4.204.1.1:** Where the required capacity of a heat pump to meet the system selection requirements of Section 150.0(h)5 is greater than or equal to 12,000 Btu/h more than the greater of the required capacity of an air conditioner to meet the design cooling load OR the capacity of the existing air conditioner. Documentation of heating and cooling load calculations in accordance with 150.0(h) must be submitted to the enforcement agency prior to permitting for both the heat pump and proposed air conditioner.