

National Definition of a Zero Emissions Building: U.S. Department of Energy Request for Information



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The United States Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Building Technologies Office ("BTO") released a Request for Information ("RFI") to solicit feedback on a draft document titled:

National Definition of a Zero Emissions Building: Part 1 Operating Emissions ("Draft")

BTO states that responses to the RFI will be utilized to develop a National Definition for a Zero Emissions building whose purpose is stated to:

... serve as a clear market signal and consistent target, backed by measurable data, that is intended to help move the building sector to zero emissions.

The BTO states in an accompanying news release to the *Draft* that:

- The Biden Administration has a goal to make zero emissions resilient new construction and retrofits common practice by 2030.
- Accomplishing the above-referenced goals will require:
 - increasing building efficiency,
 - expanding clean energy capacity
 - plugging both new and existing buildings into a grid that is cleaner
 - Approximately 30% of United States greenhouse gas emissions are from operating buildings
 - 13% of United States greenhouse gas emissions are derived from the direct burning of fossil fuels within buildings

The *Draft* is stated to act as a:

... framework, offering designers and builders multiple pathways to influence the design and operation of buildings, thereby reducing building sector emissions.

Part 1 of the definition focuses on zero operating emissions. BTO states that future parts of the definition will likely include:

- Embodied carbon
- Refrigerants
- Other key elements

The *Draft* proposes to design a zero operating emission building as one that is:

- Highly energy efficient

- Free of on-site emissions from energy use; and
- Powered solely from clean energy

The components of the *Draft* include:

- Definition, Draft Criteria
- Method of Measurement, Draft
- Verification

Responses to the RFI must be submitted electronically no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on February 5th.

A copy of the press release and the *Draft* can be found below:

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/articles/biden-harris-administration-releases-request-information-developing>

<https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2024-01/bto-national-definition-zero-emissions-building-122023.pdf>