

ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION REQUEST

Please email requests to the Mayor's Legislative Team
at [MileHighOrdinance@DenverGov.org](mailto: MileHighOrdinance@DenverGov.org) by 9 a.m. Friday. Contact the Mayor's Legislative team with questions

Date of Request: 4/16/2026

Please mark one: Bill Request or Resolution Request

Please mark one: The request directly impacts developments, projects, contracts, resolutions, or bills that involve property and impact within .5 miles of the South Platte River from Denver's northern to southern boundary? (Check map [HERE](#))

Yes No

1. Type of Request:

Contract/Grant Agreement Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Rezoning/Text Amendment

Dedication/Vacation Appropriation/Supplemental DRMC Change

Other:

2. **Title:** Amends D.R.M.C. Chapter 10, Article XIV. High-Performance Existing Buildings Program, Sections 10-400 through 10-408.

3. **Requesting Agency:** CASR

4. Contact Person:

Contact person with knowledge of proposed ordinance/resolution (e.g., subject matter expert)	Contact person for council members or mayor-council
Name: Sharon Jaye	Name: Elizabeth Babcock
Email: Sharon.jaye@denvergov.org	Email: elizabeth.babcock@denvergov.org

5. General description or background of proposed request. Attach executive summary if more space needed:

In conclusion of the Office of Climate Action, Sustainability and Resiliency's (CASR) multi-year refinement of the Energize Denver Building Performance Policy, some revisions are advised. While generally administrative in nature, these final updates and improvements will align ordinance language with retrofit realities, provide clarity, and ensure the policy continues to put compliance within reach for Denver's buildings. See attached executive summary of proposed amendments.

6. **City Attorney assigned to this request (if applicable):** Kristin Brainerd

7. **City Council District:** ALL

To be completed by Mayor's Legislative Team:

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Date Entered: _____

Energize Denver Ordinance Update Summary 2026
Concluding the Refinement Process & Codifying Practical Improvements

Policy Overview

D.R.M.C. Chapter 10, Article XIV. High-Performance Existing Buildings Program, Sections 10-400 through 10-408, referred to as “Energize Denver,” is a building performance policy designed to help Denver reach its goal of eliminating greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. Commercial and multi-family buildings are Denver’s largest source of greenhouse gas pollution at 45% of Denver emissions in 2024. The policy requires each building to meet a certain level of energy efficiency through operations and equipment improvements.

Energize Denver applies to:

- 5,000–24,999 sq. ft. buildings (~7,500 buildings) that comply by upgrading lighting to LED or covering 20% of energy use with renewables, and
- 25,000+ sq. ft. buildings (~3,000 buildings) that meet energy efficiency targets based on building type.

As of February 2026, 35% of large buildings are meeting their assigned energy efficiency targets, up from 15% three years ago. Across the portfolio of buildings 25,000 sq. ft. and larger, overall energy use has reduced 9% since 2018 (even with 400+ additional buildings across that time).

Proposed Ordinance Amendments

In conclusion of the Office of Climate Action, Sustainability and Resiliency’s (CASR) multi-year refinement of the Energize Denver Building Performance Policy, some revisions are advised. While generally administrative in nature, these final updates and improvements will align ordinance language with retrofit realities, provide clarity, and ensure the policy continues to put compliance within reach for Denver’s buildings.

From August 2024 through March 2025, CASR conducted an intensive stakeholder engagement process to improve how Energize Denver works in practice. CASR has been working directly with more than 2,000 building owners, property managers, contractors, and impacted stakeholders through public meetings, working groups, and one-on-one conversations.

Most of the improvements were put in place in 2025 through rule and guidance updates. These ordinance amendments formalize those stakeholder-driven changes and wrap up the remaining administrative refinements.

What Amendments Will Achieve

We are proposing targeted ordinance and select rule amendments that will:

- codify updates already implemented through rules and technical guidance;
- clarify language for consistency and ease of implementation;
- ensure the ordinance reflects the flexibility mechanisms now available to buildings; and
- align Denver’s policy with updated national Building Performance Standard best practices.

What Amendments Will Not Do

- Do not alter the core policy structure adopted in 2021
- Do not create new performance requirements or expand responsible buildings
- Do not impose electrification mandates, or require HVAC replacement before end of system life
- Do not require each building to reduce energy use by 30%; each building’s target is unique
- Do not change Denver’s commitment to, or progress towards, meeting our climate goals

1. TIMING CHANGES *Providing additional clarity and flexibility around deadlines and compliance pacing*

Large Buildings:

- Codify the timeline extension already earned by 98.5% of buildings - changes first target year from 2024 to 2025
- Codify a formal Benchmarking Extension process and Baseline Year Adjustment provisions

Small Buildings:

- Extend each compliance deadline by one year and split buildings into smaller groups

2. PLANNING CHANGES *Increasing clarity, flexibility, and long-term certainty in compliance pathways*

Large Buildings:

- Codify exclusion of certain sub-metered energy uses (e.g., EV charging, swimming pools, parking)
- Add Transportation Energy Credit process
- Codify Data Verification requirements

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- Expand simplified compliance pathways for residential condominium buildings
- Remove the benchmarking exemption for manufacturing and agricultural buildings (administrative clarification)
- Add required transfer of benchmarking data account upon sale of building

Small Buildings:

- Add authority to create alternate compliance options that reduce GHGs or energy use
- Add overarching goal to guide development of alternate compliance options
- Add disclosure of compliance status upon sale of building

Both Large and Small Buildings:

- Clarify the “covered building” definition by using building code terminology (clarifies but does not change covered buildings)
- Add clarifying rule definitions, including “financial solvency concerns”

3. BUDGETING & ENFORCEMENT CLARITY - *Providing predictability, transparency, and stakeholder-requested certainty*

Both Large and Small buildings:

- Codify reduced penalty structure from technical guidance into ordinance for long-term certainty
- Clarify what occurs after penalty assessment:
 - Opportunity to submit a compliance plan after penalties are assessed
 - Ability to reinvest penalties into building improvements consistent with a compliance plan
 - Codify appeals process

Accompanying Rules Updates

Additional rule updates are needed to implement the ordinance amendments and finalize practical compliance options requested by stakeholders while preserving elements that are already working well. The updates would allow: a simplified path to a maximum 30% energy reduction; increase flexibility for condominiums, MAI, restaurants, and complex buildings; simplify extensions and renewable energy rules; work with new DEDO restaurant liaison over next 2-3 months to create specialized prescriptive or performance option for restaurants; and introduce a prescriptive electrification option for small buildings.

Key Improvements Made in 2025 Process

CASR increased the options available to buildings to help put compliance within reach, including extending compliance deadlines, cutting penalties in half, and offering more support for buildings as they work to meet their energy reduction targets. Together, these improvements reinforce Denver's priority: Reducing energy use — not collecting penalties.

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