

Section 101.3 of the IECC states that the purpose of the energy code is to regulate the construction of buildings for the effective use of energy. Section 202 of the IECC defines energy cost as “The total estimated annual cost for purchasing energy for the building functions regulated by this code, including applicable demand charges.” (Emphasis added.)

If energy is not being purchased, i.e. solar power, or wood, etc. is being used, then arguably there is no energy usage and therefore no need to comply with the energy code. The whole point of the energy code is to reduce the consumption of nonrenewable energy as it was recognized that we are depleting the natural resources necessary to produce that energy.

While the decision of whether a yurt complies with the USBC is yours to make, the USBC provides for the granting of modifications if the spirit and functional intent of the code are observed. To that end, there should be some flexibility in applying the code to unique situations and an evaluation of the degree to which compliance is achieved. We are not talking about large dwellings here (where there would be the potential for much energy consumption). If someone wants to “rough it” we should be able to take that into consideration. We have had similar questions concerning areas where there are large Amish populations. Some traditionally do not use electricity. While it is a challenge to consider innovative ways to achieve code compliance, that is, in my opinion, a component of our duty as public officials.