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2016

## International Case Studies for Scotland's Climate Plan

# Regulating Energy Efficiency - Boulder, USA

### Facts & Figures

Over 5 years, the project saved 13,245 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

That's the equivalent of taking 3,310 cars off the roads

Almost \$4.5million has been invested by landlords in improved homes for residents

\$758,563 has been paid by the City Council in rebates to support landlord investment

\$344,225 saved on energy bills by consumers each year

\$2,757 average cost of improvements to households

1,381,257 kWh of energy saved every year

### Overview

The City of Boulder sits 25 north west of Denver in the American state of Colorado. In 2011, Boulder City Council introduced a new set of regulations, known as "SmartRegs" as part of the City Council's commitments on climate change. These regulations require all licensed rental housing to meet a basic energy efficiency standard by the start of 2019. The SmartRegs work alongside existing legislation on housing standards and landlord registration and licensing and require landlords to make improvements to properties.

The average cost of energy efficiency upgrades needed to meet the standards is \$2,757, with most upgrades focusing on loft and cavity insulation or replacing inefficient boilers. Between 2011 and March 2016, private investment in energy efficiency amounted to \$4,462,257. Annual electricity and carbon savings have been significant at 1,381,257 kWh and 2,649 tCO<sub>2</sub> respectively. This amounts to carbon savings of 13,245 tCO<sub>2</sub> over 5 years.

### Aims

SmartRegs aim to cut carbon emissions and make Boulder's existing housing stock more comfortable for residents. The regulations emerged out of a multi-departmental effort in the City Council in 2009, involving residents and landlords in an extensive consultation process. This included public meetings, a formal consultation process and online surveys as well as social media consultation. SmartRegs build on previous efforts by the City Council which saw energy efficiency regulations for new buildings exceed the International Energy Conservation Code minimum standard for new domestic and commercial buildings.

## How it works

In many cases, landlords upgraded properties beyond the minimum standard. Landlords, estate agents, and tenants were brought on board through an extensive engagement process with the City Government. Enforcement through the existing rental licensing process and health and safety inspection has meant little additional financial or administrative burden to the City Government.

Certain categories of property are exempt and the City Council has made \$758,563 available in rebates to landlords to support upgrades where landlords would otherwise find this too expensive. Out of an estimated 20,000 rented properties in the city, over 12,800 have been inspected so far and over 75% are compliant. The backstop date of December 31st 2018 provides a final date by which all eligible rental properties must be compliant.

## Benefits

Boulder's SmartRegs have delivered almost \$4.5m of improvements to the city's existing housing stock over 5 years and resulted in electricity savings which are equivalent to 3,310 cars being taken off the roads. Relatively low cost improvements to properties have seen 13,245 tCO<sub>2</sub> saved over the same time period.

### Economic

\$4,462,257 has been invested by landlords since 2011, improving the housing stock and resulting in savings of \$344,225 each year for consumers.

### Environmental

Energy efficiency improvements have resulted in 13,245 tCO<sub>2</sub> being saved over 5 years. Electricity savings amount to 6,906,285 kWh and the regulations have seen savings of almost 1.5m therms of heat.

### Social

Residents of 9,748 properties across the city of Boulder enjoy warmer, more energy efficient homes, and save money on their energy bills as a result.

## Further information:

[https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/SmartRegs\\_Performance\\_Q1\\_2016-1-201606091409.pdf](https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/SmartRegs_Performance_Q1_2016-1-201606091409.pdf)

<https://bouldercolorado.gov/plan-develop/smartregs>

