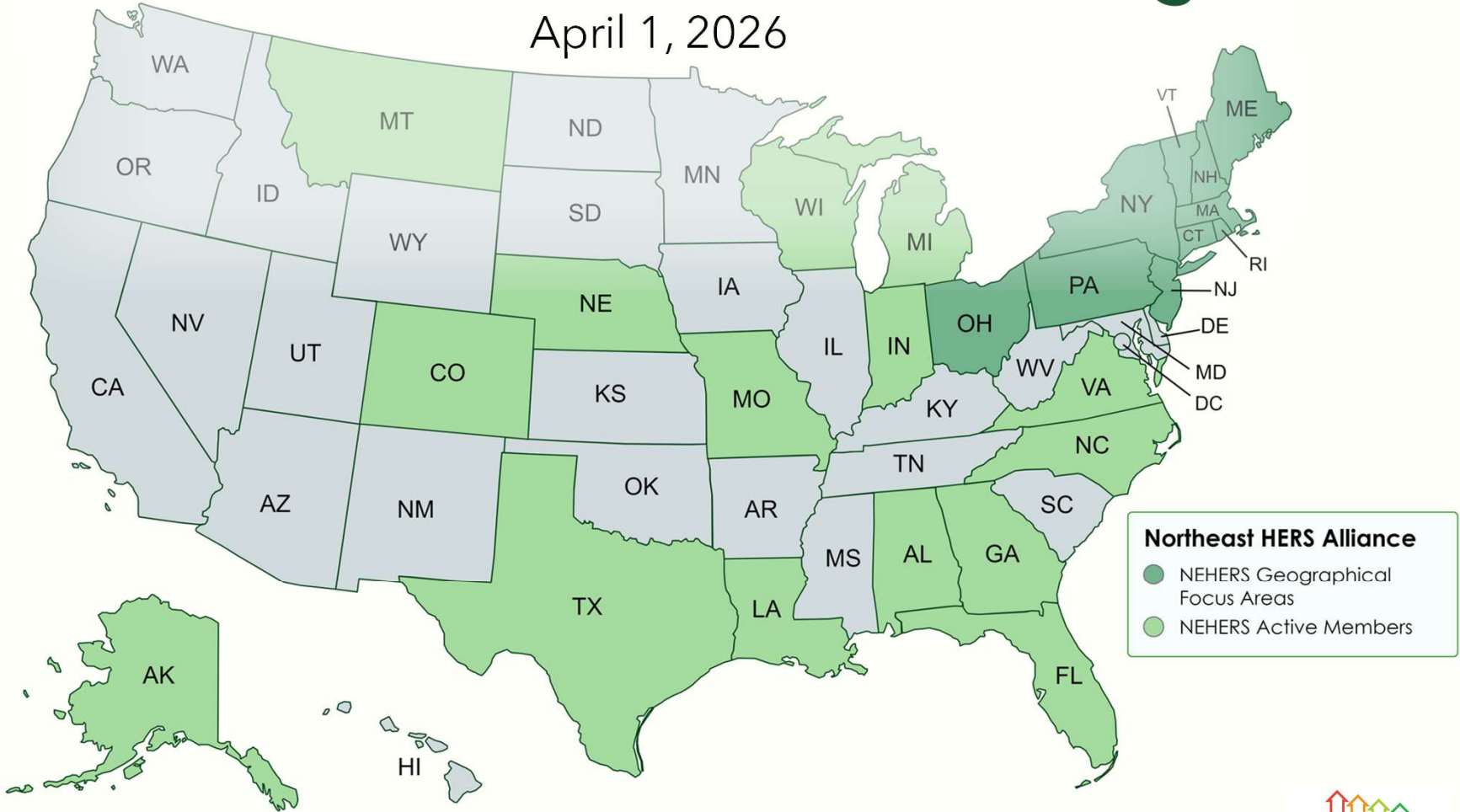


# Conversation with DOER on HERS Ratings & ADUs

April 1, 2026



**Northeast HERS Alliance**

- NEHERS Geographical Focus Areas
- NEHERS Active Members



# Announcement: Spring 2026 HERS Rater Training begins April 13<sup>th</sup>!

**Register by Friday, April 3rd to save your spot!**

- Visit <https://nehers.org/hers-rater-trainings>
- Register at <https://nehers.org/event?EventID=9593>

**April 13-24, 2026, EST and May 4-8, 2026, EST**

- Online Modules (Weekdays 9 AM-Noon AND Wednesdays 1-4 PM on Zoom)
- Classroom-Field Practical Component (Weekdays 8:30 AM-5PM - Primarily Live in the Field - Newton, MA)

# Announcement: Summer 2026 RFI & HERS Modeler Mentorship Program begins June 29<sup>th</sup>!



- **Online Classes** - learn basic building science, applicable math skills, and RESNET Standards. Monday-Friday, 5-7:30pm.
- **Gain Hands-On Experience** - Job Shadowing with skilled HERS Raters and Field Workshops.
- **Receive Personalized Support & Career Preparation** with a paired Career Mentor and NEHERS Success Coach

## Eligibility Requirements:

- MA Resident
- 18 years or older
- (1/2 of students) Live in an [Environmental Justice Community](#) / Low-Income Eligible
- Authorized to work in the US
- Access to laptop, mouse, keyboard, WiFi

<https://nehers.org/mentorship/application>

# Agenda

- Welcome and Intros - (15 minutes)
- Presentation - (~60 minutes)
- Questions and Answers - (~15 minutes)



# Audience Reminders

- Participating in listen-only mode
- Submit a question by typing it into the Question's Pane at the right of your screen any time
- Download the Handout from the Handout Pane
- Please follow NEHERS on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram
- Provide feedback through our electronic survey following the webinar

# Speaker:



## Ian Finlayson

Ian is the Deputy Director of Buildings Codes and Policy at the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, where he works on the policy development and implementation of a number of Massachusetts energy efficiency priorities. These include the state building energy codes, the Mass Save energy efficiency plans, and other building decarbonization programs.

# Speaker:



## **Becca Edson**

Becca is the Decarbonization Architect for the DOER, focusing on the energy codes and education. She previously worked for many years as a residential architect.



MASSACHUSETTS  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY RESOURCES**

# HERS requirements in MA

## Current status & proposed changes

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April 1, 2026

Presented by  
**Ian Finlayson & Becca Edson**



# *We want your feedback!*

- Current HERS requirements in Massachusetts
- Thoughts on the additions and major alterations ratings?
- Should ADUs built within/attached to existing houses have a higher rating?
- Embodied carbon credits - feedback?
- Ekotrope BETA report - thoughts?



# Draft updates for Public Comment:

**TABLE R406.5 MAXIMUM ENERGY RATING INDEX**

	Maximum HERS Index score <sup>a,b</sup>			
	New construction permits after July 1, 2024	New Construction with R406.5.2 embodied carbon credit	<del>Accessory Dwelling Units</del> <del>Accessory Dwelling Units<sup>d</sup> &amp; Tiny Homes</del>	Major alterations, or additions, <del>or change of use<sup>c</sup></del>
<i>Mixed-Fuel Building</i>	42	45	52	65
Solar Electric Generation	42	45	55	70
<i>All-Electric Building</i>	45	48	55	70
Solar Electric & <i>All-Electric Building</i>	45	48	58	75

<sup>a</sup> Maximum HERS rating prior to onsite renewable electric generation in accordance with Section R406.5

<sup>b</sup> The building shall meet the mandatory requirements of Section R406.2.

<sup>c</sup> Alterations, ~~or~~ Additions ~~or Change of use~~ covered by Section R502.1.1 or R503.1.5 are subject to this maximum HERS rating, except for *Historic Buildings* which may opt to follow R503.1.1 for *alterations*.

<sup>d</sup> The ADU's relationship to the primary residence (e.g. attached, detached, basement conversion, etc.) does not matter with respect to the HERS rating.

# Additions & major alterations

TABLE R406.5 MAXIMUM ENERGY RATING INDEX

	Maximum HERS Index score <sup>a,b</sup>			
	New construction permits after July 1, 2024	New Construction with R406.5.2 embodied carbon credit	<del>Accessory Dwelling Units</del> <del>Accessory Dwelling Units<sup>d</sup> &amp; Tiny Homes</del>	Major alterations, or additions, <del>or</del> <del>change of use<sup>c</sup></del>
<i>Mixed-Fuel Building</i>	42	45	52	65
Solar Electric Generation	42	45	55	70
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Solar Electric & <i>All-Electric Building</i>	45	48	58	75

Is the target of **65/70/75** too strict, too lenient, or just right?

<sup>a</sup> Maximum HERS rating prior to onsite renewable electric generation in accordance with Section R406.5

<sup>b</sup> The building shall meet the mandatory requirements of Section R406.2.

<sup>c</sup> Alterations; ~~or~~ Additions ~~or~~ ~~Change of use~~ covered by Section R502.1.1 or R503.1.5 are subject to this maximum HERS rating, except for *Historic Buildings* which may opt to follow R503.1.1 for *alterations*.

<sup>d</sup> The ADU's relationship to the primary residence (e.g. attached, detached, basement conversion, etc.) does not matter with respect to the HERS rating.

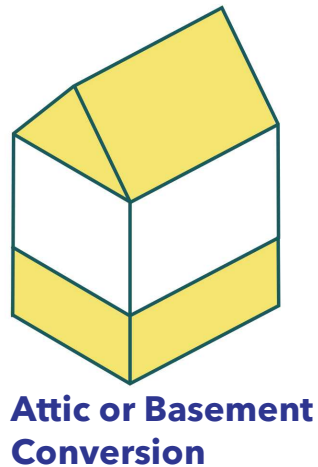
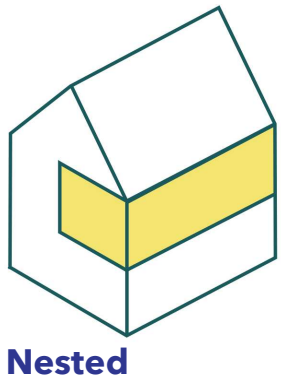
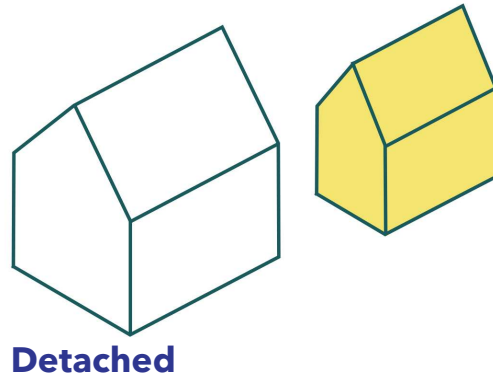
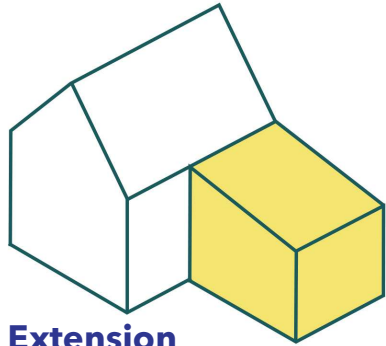
# Additions & major alterations : when to HERS ?

**R503.1.5 Extensive Alterations and Level 3 Alterations.** Alterations that meet **either any** of the following criteria shall require the building or *dwelling unit* to comply with the maximum HERS ratings for alterations; **and** additions **or change of use** shown in Table R406.5:

1. Meet the IRC definition for *Extensive Alteration* and that exceeds 1000 sq ft or **meets or exceeds** 100% of the existing conditioned floor area of the dwelling unit for one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings(townhouses).
2. Meet the IEBC definition for *Level 3 Alteration* and that exceeds 1000 sq ft or 100% of the existing conditioned floor area of the building area for Group R-2, R-3, and R-4 buildings with three stories or less in height above grade plane, other than one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings(townhouses).
3. **For projects including both alterations and additions, if the alteration exceeds 1,000 sq ft, and the addition exceeds 600 sq ft.**

**SUBSTANTIAL PROJECT.** Any *alteration* of a *building* or structure where more than 50% of a *dwelling unit's* total combined surface area of the walls and ceiling that constitute the building thermal envelope are opened to framing.

## Should ADUs attached to/ within the main house have higher HERS ratings?



Should the HERS rating for these types of ADUs Be raised ?

# HERS rating for a Tiny House..... ?

IRC Appendix AQ : Tiny Houses

A dwelling that is 400 square feet or less in floor area excluding lofts.

# Draft updates to HERS in base code 11<sup>th</sup> edition

	Maximum HERS Index score <sup>a,b</sup> for new construction			Existing building Maximum HERS index score <sup>a, c</sup>
	New construction	<u>New Construction with R406.5.2 embodied carbon credit</u>	<u>New ADUs &amp; Tiny Homes</u>	Major alterations, or additions <sup>c</sup> including ADU conversions <sup>d</sup>
<i>Mixed-Fuel Building</i>	49	52	52	65
Solar Electric Generation	52	55	55	70
<i>All-Electric Building</i>	52	55	55	70
Solar Electric & <i>All-Electric</i>	55	58	58	75

- **TABLE R406.4 Maximum HERS Index**

<sup>a</sup> Maximum HERS rating prior to onsite renewable electric generation

<sup>b</sup> The building shall meet the mandatory requirements of Section R406.2. except for alterations, additions and ADU conversions.

<sup>c</sup> Alterations, or Additions covered by Section R502.1.1 or R503.1.5 are subject to this maximum HERS rating, except for *Historic Buildings* which may opt to follow R503.1.1 for *alterations*.

<sup>d</sup> add a clarification about where ADUs are in the existing building chapter

# Embodied Carbon Credits

## Insulation

Embodied Carbon Insulation calculator - DOER v2.0 6... • Saved to this PC

File Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Automate Help

Embodied Carbon Insulation Incentive calculator

2025 Massachusetts Stretch Code and Specialized Code

Low-rise Residential code: HERS Index: 3 point incentive for net GWP of 0 or less

Commercial code chapter: Section C406: 8 point incentive for net GWP of 0 or less

Start HERE:  Number of housing units

Total Conditioned Floor Area (sq ft.) Color key:

Project Site Address Required input for basic calculation

Builder Company name Optional inputs (required for product-specific data)

HERS rater & company Calculation outputs

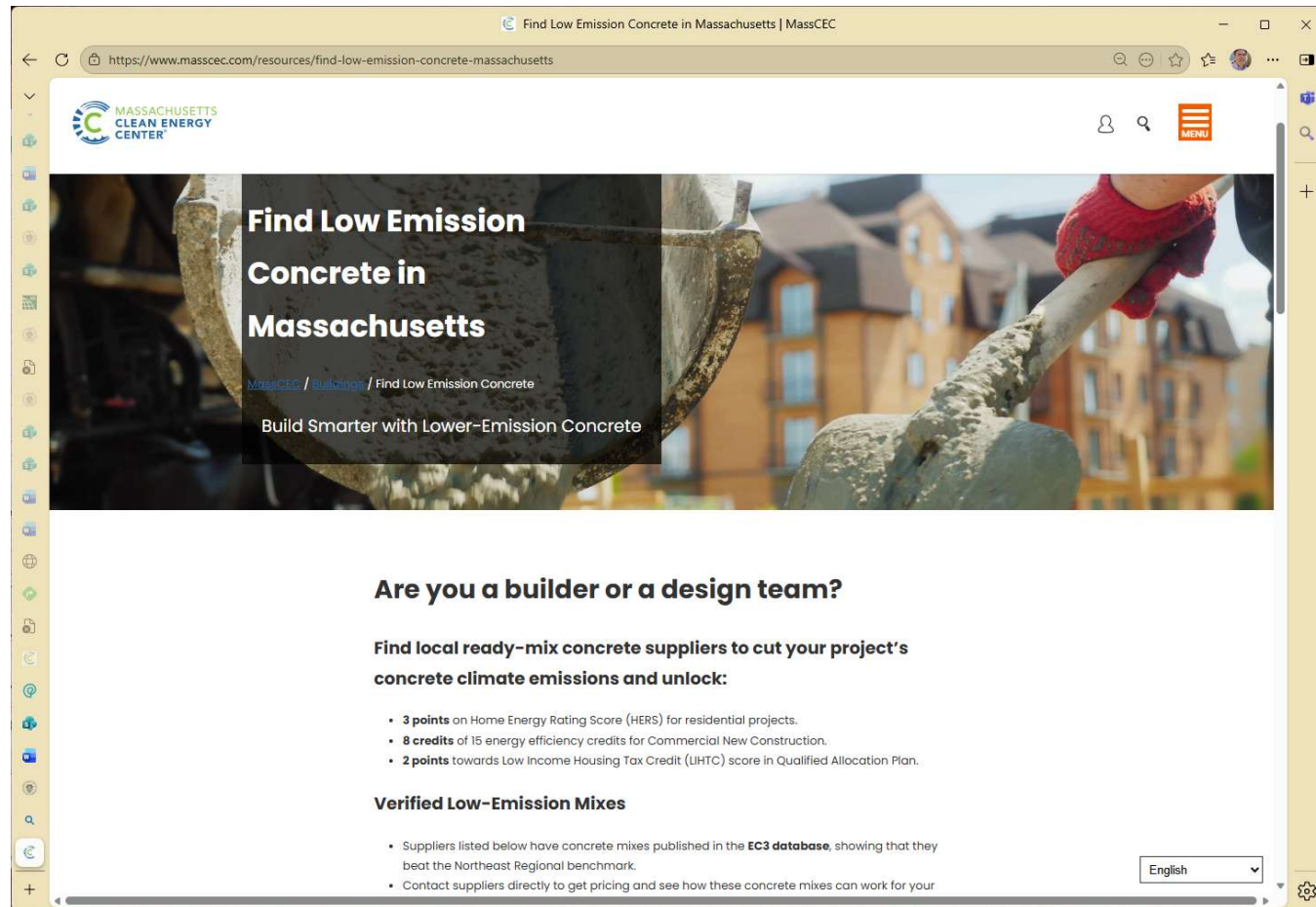
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Portion of building assembly	Insulation Material type used	Default Global Warming Potential (kg CO <sub>2</sub> e / sq m RSI-1) (from table)	Product R-Value	Surface Area (gross square feet)	Conversion factor (square feet to square meters)	Framing Factor ("1.0" for continuous insulation, "0.8" for cavity insulation)	Project has sourced a Type III - Product specific Environmental Product Declaration (EPD)	Product Specific Global Warming Potential (kg CO <sub>2</sub> e / sq m RSI-1)	GWP Result (kg CO <sub>2</sub> e)							
Notes:	Select insulation material type from List (or Other if using a custom EPD)		To account for thickness of insulation				Insulation material & EPD Number (if applicable)	Add product specific EPD GWP value if using:								
Below grade, slab, slab edge		#/N/A	X	X	X	0.0929	X	1.0	=	#/N/A						
Basement walls (1)		#/N/A	X	X	X	0.0929	X	1.0	=	#/N/A						

Embodied Insulation calc example1 Reference GWP table

Ready Accessibility: Investigate Display Settings 80%

# Embodied Carbon Credits

## Concrete



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the MassCEC website. The page title is "Find Low Emission Concrete in Massachusetts | MassCEC". The URL in the address bar is "https://www.masscec.com/resources/find-low-emission-concrete-massachusetts". The page features the MassCEC logo in the top left corner and a navigation menu in the top right. The main content area has a large image of a concrete mixer truck with a person's hand in a red glove holding a tool. Overlaid on this image is the text: "Find Low Emission Concrete in Massachusetts", "MassCEC / Bulkpage / Find Low Emission Concrete", and "Build Smarter with Lower-Emission Concrete". Below the image, the text reads: "Are you a builder or a design team?", "Find local ready-mix concrete suppliers to cut your project's concrete climate emissions and unlock:", and a list of benefits: "3 points on Home Energy Rating Score (HERS) for residential projects.", "8 credits of 15 energy efficiency credits for Commercial New Construction.", and "2 points towards Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) score in Qualified Allocation Plan.". Below this is a section titled "Verified Low-Emission Mixes" with two bullet points: "Suppliers listed below have concrete mixes published in the EC3 database, showing that they beat the Northeast Regional benchmark." and "Contact suppliers directly to get pricing and see how these concrete mixes can work for your". A language dropdown menu is set to "English" in the bottom right corner.

# Ekotrope BETA report

DOER-funded project to make HERS compliance more transparent & visible for all users



Thoughts?  
Feedback?

*Please tell us what you think !*

becca.edson@mass.gov

Stretchcode@mass.gov

# Thank you!

Please fill out the webinar survey!

- RFI & Modeler Mentorship Program: <https://nehers.org/mentorship>
- Upcoming HERS Rater Trainings: <https://nehers.org/hers-rater-trainings>
- Upcoming Webinars: <https://nehers.org/webinars>
  - April 15<sup>th</sup> - TimberHP: High-Performance, Low-Carbon Wood Fiber Insulation: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6050374347577776472>

Contact us: [info@nehers.org](mailto:info@nehers.org) / 978-633-3013