

2025-5 Implement Home Energy Labelling

Moved by: Sustainable Building Manitoba

This is a new resolution.

The Government of Manitoba should develop and implement a mandatory home energy labelling program for residential properties at the time of listing for sale or rent. This program must include:

- A standardized energy performance label—based on energy assessments—that is clear, comparable, and accessible to all Manitobans
- Public investment in training and certifying energy advisors to deliver assessments province-wide
- A phased implementation strategy beginning with voluntary labelling and moving to mandatory disclosure, aligned with public education campaigns and financial support for low-income households
- Integration with Efficiency Manitoba incentives to encourage retrofits based on building performance

Because: Energy labelling has a proven track record. Canadians are already familiar with Energy Star and EnerGuide labels on appliances, vehicles, and windows—programs that have shifted purchasing decisions, improved product standards, and lowered household energy use. Homes should be no exception: when energy performance is visible, people make better choices.

Because: Home energy labelling is a matter of consumer protection. Buyers and renters often request past utility bills to estimate energy costs—but those reflect occupant behaviour, not building performance. A home kept at 17°C by an energy-conscious owner will look efficient on paper, while another kept at 23°C may appear wasteful, even if better built. Some homes may have been vacant or underused. A standardized label—produced through an on-site energy assessment—offers building-specific data on air tightness, insulation, and mechanical systems.

These assessments also help owners and buyers understand which retrofit upgrades will offer the greatest impact.

Because: Energy poverty is rising in Manitoba, where many households spend an outsized portion of income on heating and electricity. Low-income renters are often left with the least efficient homes—those with aging furnaces, inadequate insulation, and drafty windows—leading to high bills and poor health. Energy labelling exposes this imbalance and helps tenants, landlords, and policymakers target the worst-performing buildings. It also supports programs that enable upgrades, reducing monthly costs and improving comfort and health outcomes.

Because: Energy efficiency is a public health issue. Poor-quality housing contributes to respiratory illnesses, stress, and other chronic conditions. Drafty, cold, or poorly ventilated homes put residents—especially children, seniors, and those with pre-existing conditions—at risk. Energy labelling can identify homes with the worst performance, supporting interventions that improve indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and overall health. Healthier homes mean fewer sick days, reduced healthcare costs, and better quality of life.

Because: Energy labelling is a catalyst for market transformation. Just as fuel economy ratings changed the auto industry, home labels can highlight high-performing buildings and identify upgrade opportunities. Assessments used to generate labels also give property owners a clear roadmap for improvements—helping prioritize upgrades that reduce emissions and utility bills. Labelling encourages the real estate market to recognize and reward energy-efficient upgrades, influencing appraisals and resale value. Builders and renovators will be incentivized to improve performance, and buyers will have confidence in their choices.

Because: A labelling program will support Manitoba's transition to a net-zero economy by 2050. It will create demand for trained energy advisors, retrofit contractors, HVAC professionals, and insulation experts—well-paying, local jobs that cannot be outsourced. These careers strengthen the workforce Manitoba needs to scale retrofits, reduce emissions, and build climate resilience in homes across the province.

Because: Energy labelling empowers informed decisions about one of the most significant costs of homeownership—energy use. Buyers deserve transparency around energy performance, just as they

do for flood risk or structural integrity. Without labelling, energy efficiency remains invisible, undervalued, and underinvested in.

Because: Manitoba's housing stock is among the least energy efficient in Canada, particularly older homes. Energy labelling can spur investment in upgrades, lower utility costs, and provide the data needed to reduce residential sector emissions, which account for over 15% of the province's total GHGs.

Because: Manitoba is beginning to face electricity capacity and reliability challenges, particularly during extreme cold snaps and heat waves. Reducing residential energy demand through upgrades not only lowers costs for households—it protects the grid from strain. The cheapest, cleanest energy is the energy we don't use. Labelling enables demand-side management by making energy waste visible and actionable.

Because: The time of sale or rent is the most effective trigger point for upgrades. A well-designed label helps appraisers and lenders reflect energy performance in valuations, encourages efficiency-focused purchasing decisions, and prevents buyers and renters from unknowingly taking on homes with unaffordable energy costs—especially important in a province with high energy poverty.

Because: Other provinces have already begun to implement or pilot home energy labelling programs. In Nova Scotia, Efficiency Nova Scotia provides free home energy assessments and labels, supported by retrofit rebates—an approach that has increased demand for upgrades and strengthened the energy retrofit workforce. British Columbia and Ontario have also launched municipal and provincial labelling efforts. Manitoba can build on these lessons to implement a practical, made-in-Manitoba approach that avoids reinventing the wheel.

Because: Labelling is a proven tool for driving demand, accelerating retrofits, and building workforce capacity in energy advising and contracting. It aligns with existing federal programs like Greener Homes and Efficiency Manitoba incentives to maximize impact.

Because: The communities most affected by energy poverty—Indigenous, newcomer, and low-income households—often live in the least efficient housing. A strong labelling system, paired

with equitable support, can improve health, affordability, and dignity by identifying homes most in need of upgrades.

Because: This resolution advances several Manitoba Road Map goals:

- *Ending Poverty:* by addressing the visibility and impact of energy costs
- *Local & Fair Economies:* by supporting skilled green jobs and local businesses
- *Tackling Climate Change:* by enabling data-driven reductions in building emission and supporting Manitoba's net-zero targets
- *Directing Our Own Future:* by helping residents understand and act on their energy data

How this Resolution will be Advanced:

Sustainable Building Manitoba will work with CCEDNet members, municipalities, Efficiency Manitoba, and the real estate sector to support the development of a home energy labelling framework. We will also engage equity-seeking groups and retrofit service providers to ensure the program design is fair, practical, and grounded in Manitoba's housing realities.