

Complexity and Contradiction at the NAHB

Is this some kind of institutional Aikido? NAHB fights 2030 challenge with one hand while embracing DOE Builders Challenge with both arms?



By Michael Chandler | June 21, 2009



Image Credit: Michael Chandler

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) is [actively fighting](#) the American Clean Energy Security [Act](#), arguing that additional energy savings beyond 30% will be impossible.

The NAHB has just announced a dual certification partnership with the [Department of Energy's Builders Challenge](#), which certifies buildings that perform in excess of 30% better than code.

I'm trying to work this out. Is 30% improvement impossible, or is it just part of our program?

I'm joking, of course; 30% to 50% improvement in energy performance is proven, practical, and affordable.

And I think I understand the NAHB's thinking, too. It's hoping to use its program to encourage green building through education and market development while holding off mandated improvements to the building code, etc. that would negatively affect NAHB members who don't get on the green building train. Does this make them "pro-choice"?

This weekend, in Charleston, S.C., for the [Atlantic Green Conference](#), I stayed with a builder who does historic preservation in the area. He has restored some old beach houses to create [a delightful bed-and-breakfast](#). He told me, "In this town, green building means you have two Dumpsters in the front yard, one for wood and one for trash." He was hopping mad at rampant "greenwashing" and ready to do something about it. But at the same time, he's driving a Hummer with peace sign decals stuck to it. I know we all pull tool trailers and trash trailers on a daily basis, so a big truck is just part of the deal but...it's a complicated world.

The NAHB is seeking [comment](#) for the next iteration of the National Green Building Standard. Let them know what you think about duct blaster and blower door testing and PLEASE, PLEASE run your renovation projects through the online scoring tool and give feedback on how to make it more user-friendly.