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Here are some realities on the cap and trade regulation. As written, before you sell your existing home, you must have a certified HERS (Home Energy Rating System) rater or a BPI (Building Performance Institute, www.bpi.org) certified inspector write the report and recommend energy upgrades for a 15% efficiency gain. There is already a requirement to have a label posted in new homes that has information on it to help the rater determine your HERS rating in the future. It has insulation levels, Window R values, heating and cooling efficiency levels and water heating levels to be posted on the electric panel before there is a final inspection. This is required for any new home permitted after May 1, 2009. While there are rebates and grants proposed to help with older homes, they don't deal with the two most important issues: whole house air sealing and air duct sealing.

For new homes, the goal under cap and trade is to be 30% more efficient than today's new homes by 2012. The Bush Administration had the same goal but the year was 2015. That is a feasible number, and is actually equal to the level to which Bain-Waring is building now. All of our homes are Energy Star Certified and have a HERS rating label posted on our electric panel. All of our homes are inspected by HERS raters and have been inspected before sheet rock and at completion, along with undergoing a battery of tests for whole house and duct sealing. I am hopeful that our customers will be able to resell their homes for a number of years without needing any upgrades. Any Bain-Waring home built in the last twenty years will be at least 15% more efficient than other code built homes at the time of construction.

The HERS rating is a product of RESNET (Residential Energy Services Network. www.natresnet.org) and has been around for awhile. It is tied to the International Energy Efficiency Code. That code is updated every couple of years, although the time between upgrades has been shortened, and States must adopt the newest , which was 2009, before funds will be passed on from the TARP fund. HERS rates homes from 100 (any new home built after May, 2009 is considered to be the new American Standard Home and = 100) to Zero (a zero energy home, one that uses no more energy than it produces). Zero energy homes must have renewable sources, such as wind and solar. Most of our homes rate between 65 and 75 on the HERS index, or 25% to 35% more efficient than the new homes built after May, 2009. To reach the Energy Star Label you must score at least an 85 on the HERS index. Most new homes standing today rate at 115 and older homes much higher.

Mark Waring, V.P.