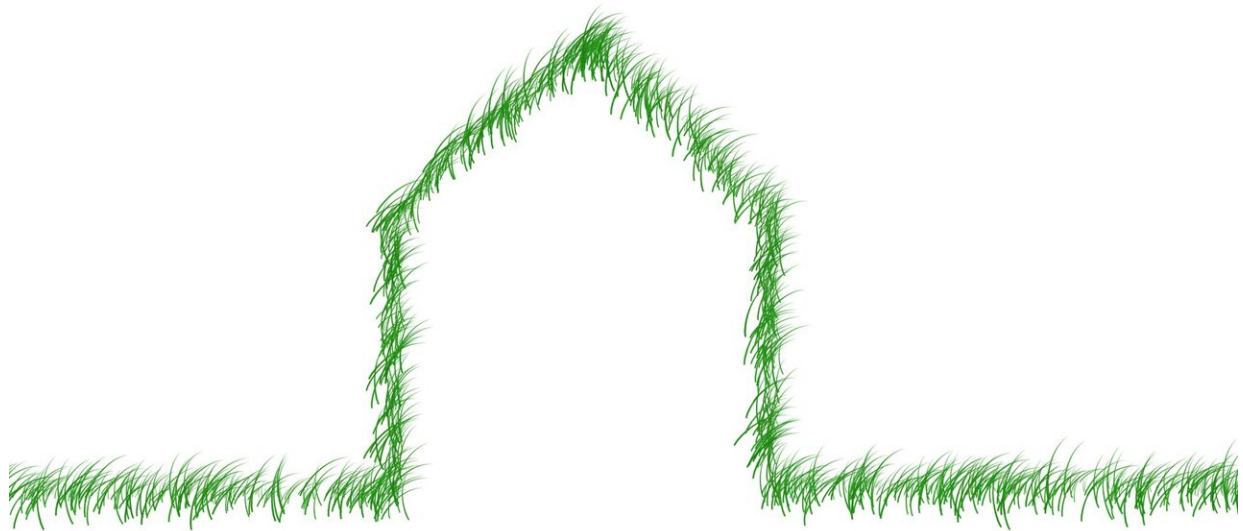


# Mandatory building energy audits alone do not overcome barriers to energy efficiency

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New York City's pioneering Local Law 87 requires office and residential buildings to monitor their energy use, using detailed audits. In a study published today (March 30) in the research journal *Nature Energy*, Constantine E. Kontokosta, Danielle Spiegel-Feld and Sokratis Papadopoulos of New York University discuss the impact of this requirement on building owners, looking closely at detailed energy use and audit data between 2011 and 2016 from about 4,000 buildings. As a

result of the law, the researchers found that energy use fell by a modest -2.5% for multifamily residential buildings and -4.9% for office buildings.

"The results suggest that mandatory audits, by themselves, create an insufficient incentive to invest in [energy efficiency](#) at the scale needed to meet citywide carbon-reduction goals," wrote the authors.

Energy use in existing buildings is responsible for an estimated 67% of all New York City carbon emissions, the authors wrote. More than 20 cities, including Austin, Chicago, and San Francisco, have adopted policies to increase data and transparency on [energy use](#), seeking to encourage market interventions to reduce energy consumption and carbon pollution. New York City has led the way in this regard.

The New York University study seeks to inform urban energy policy decisions by comparing energy use in properties that have performed a mandatory energy audit with those that have not within New York City.

The article, titled "The impact of mandatory energy audits on building energy use," is co-authored by: Kontokosta, associate professor of urban science and planning, and director of the Civics Analytics program, NYU Marron Institute of Urban Management; Spiegel-Feld of the Guarini Center on Environmental, Energy and Land Use Law, NYU School of Law; and Papadopoulos, NYU Tandon's Department of Civil and Urban Engineering, and Center for Urban Science & Progress (CUSP).

**More information:** The impact of mandatory energy audits on building energy use, *Nature Energy* (2020). [DOI: 10.1038/s41560-020-0589-6](#) , [nature.com/articles/s41560-020-0589-6](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41560-020-0589-6)

Provided by New York University

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