



May 20, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman  
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural  
Resources  
SD-304 Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and  
Natural Resources  
SD-304 Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Bingaman and Murkowski:

I am writing to express the American Institute of Architects' strong support for building efficiency draft legislation that the Committee released on May 12.

According to the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration, buildings and their construction are responsible for nearly half of all greenhouse gas emissions produced in the U.S. every year. DOE's Building Energy Data Book reveals that the building sector accounts for 39 percent of total U.S. energy consumption, more than both the transportation and industry sectors. The same study found that buildings are responsible for 71 percent of U.S. electricity consumption and that buildings in the United States alone account for 9.8 percent of carbon dioxide emissions worldwide. In fact, according to the Department of Energy, U.S. buildings account for nearly the same amount of carbon emissions as all sectors of the economies of Japan, France, and the United Kingdom combined.

In response, in 2005 the AIA adopted a policy position calling for the immediate reduction in the amount of greenhouse gas-emitting energy used in all new and significantly renovated buildings, with a goal of making new and significantly renovated buildings carbon neutral by 2030. Today, architects across the country are working with their clients to design buildings that are dramatically more energy efficient than those designed in the past. The goals of energy-efficient and carbon-neutral buildings are ambitious, but they are both necessary and achievable.

The AIA believes that the Committee's draft building efficiency legislation will help place our country on the right track towards meeting these goals. In particular, we support the advanced energy codes provision (Sec. \_01) and the State Energy Efficiency Grants Program (Subtitle D). Developing aggressive targets for energy codes and providing the resources to enable them to be administered will move the country towards a more

sustainable future. Investing in green building retrofits not only improves our energy independence and protects the environment; it also creates jobs. According to the National Association of Industrial Office Properties, every \$1 million spent on design and construction creates 28.5 full-time jobs. That means that an investment of \$3 billion in energy efficiency retrofits of buildings could create or save as many as 85,000 new jobs in this country.

As the Committee moves forward with energy legislation, we strongly encourage it to explore ways to promote location efficiency in the built environment as well as energy efficiency. Studies have shown that compact, smart growth linked to public transportation can have major impacts on GHG emissions by reducing vehicle-miles traveled (VMT). For instance, a 2008 study by the Urban Land Institute, *Growing Cooler*, found that compact, walkable communities could reduce the need for driving by 20 percent to 40 percent. Therefore, the AIA supports providing additional incentives and/or setting as an additional priority for funding under Subtitle D to projects that are location efficient, generally defined as within one-half mile of a mass transit facility.

We commend the Committee for its leadership, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other bills that ensure the built environment is a key component of our nation's energy independence and climate change policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AG', written in a cursive style.

Andrew L. Goldberg, Assoc. AIA  
Senior Director, Federal Relations

cc: Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee