



Green Building Provisions

Key Points:

- *The U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously approved a resolution to reduce carbon emissions of all renovations and newly constructed buildings by 60% by the year 2010 and become carbon neutral by 2030.*
- *Green buildings can save governments and taxpayers money by reducing annual energy expenses by 20% - 50%.*
- *In attempts to make Chicago the greenest city in America, the government chooses one industry each year to help become more energy efficient. They aim to save 10%-25% of energy per company.*
- *Washington, Maryland, Arkansas and Nevada each passed bills during the 2005 state legislative sessions requiring that state-funded building projects and substantial renovations meet green building standards.*
- *Studies show that without tax incentives solar technology will take an extra 15 years to diffuse into the marketplace.*

Green Building Measures

AIA Position

The American Institute of Architects seeks to dramatically increase the number of high-performance, energy-efficient “green” buildings constructed in both the private and public sectors. Green buildings use resources, such as energy and water more efficiently and have systems in place to take advantage of existing natural resources. To facilitate these goals, below are some resources to help understand the importance of policies promoting energy efficiency and green buildings.

Action Sought

The AIA urges the support of measures that would require all public buildings to meet a standard of energy efficiency and that would create tax incentives to encourage green building in the private sector.

Explanation and Justification

Buildings consume between one third and one half of the energy expended in the United States. Furthermore, buildings use two-thirds of all electricity and produce approximately 43% of carbon dioxide emissions. By increasing energy efficiency we will not only reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but will significantly decrease green house gas emissions and help to curtail the worldwide effects of global warming. The only way to significantly reduce total energy consumption is to address energy efficiency in buildings. Lowering energy consumption, minimizing waste and conserving water, can also lessen the costs associated with building maintenance and improve indoor air quality which can increase health and productivity.

Public Buildings

Cities must lead the way in green design. By requiring the use of high-performance buildings, cities can remain on the forefront of technology and can save money. According to the Federal Energy Management Program, higher energy efficiency standards for federal agencies dropped total energy consumption by 23% from 1985 to 2001, saving taxpayers approximately \$1.4 billion per year.

Commercial Buildings

Commercial buildings are responsible for almost half of the total U.S. energy consumption and half of the electricity consumption. Every year, nearly 170,000 new commercial buildings are constructed and 44,000 are demolished. The private sector cannot be ignored if true energy-efficiency is to be sought. Green building tax credits encourage developers to invest in green buildings by offsetting some of the initial cost and help foster economic growth.

What America Thinks: A recent nationwide poll of voters (1,000 sample, margin of error +/- 3.1%) conducted January 3-5, 2006, by two respected national pollsters — The Tarrance Group, a Republican firm, and Lake Research Partners, a Democratic firm — indicated that 84 percent of voters agreed that “new tax breaks should be given to encourage the design and construction of buildings that significantly reduce pollution and energy consumption.”