



USGBC  
2101 L STREET, NW  
SUITE 500  
WASHINGTON DC 20037  
202 828-7422  
USGBC.ORG

FOUNDERS

David Gottfried  
Michael Italiano  
S. Richard Fedrizzi

April 10, 2019

The Honorable Bobby Rush  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
2322 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rush and Ranking Member Upton:

On behalf of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), a national nonprofit representing nearly 9,000 member companies and organizations committed to cost-effective and high-performing buildings, I write to provide comments for the hearing “Investing in America’s Energy Infrastructure: Improving Energy Efficiency and Creating a Diverse Workforce.” We commend the Energy Subcommittee for convening this hearing. We believe that the Committee and Congress should act swiftly to help improve the condition of infrastructure, including buildings and their interaction with the energy grid, across the country.

USGBC is dedicated to transforming the way buildings and communities are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous world. Best known for the successful Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification system, we leverage our education, credentials, events, communications, and policy advocacy activities to support the public and private sectors in advancing high-performance, cost-effective buildings that save energy, water and money. Reducing the contribution of buildings to greenhouse gas emissions has long been a core area of our work along with a focus on supporting local job creation.

**USGBC Supports HR 2041, HR 2044, and relevant sections of HR 2114**

Many of the bills under consideration today are aligned with our work in advancing high-performance cost effective building. USGBC supports the following bills:

- H.R. 2041, Weatherization Enhancement and Local Energy Efficiency Investment and Accountability Act; and
- H.R. 2044, Smart Building Acceleration Act; and



- Sections of H.R. 2114, Enhancing State Energy Security Planning and Emergency Preparedness Act of 2019, regarding the reauthorization of State Energy Programs.

We wish to provide comments to enhance the effectiveness or reach of other legislation included in the hearing.

### **H.R. 2043: Home Owner Managing Energy Savings (HOMES) Act of 2019**

USGBC believes that improving the efficiency of existing residences is important to reduce utility bill costs while making homes more comfortable and supporting resident health. The HOMES Act would provide a much-needed incentive to help accelerate this important effort. While we support the HOMES Act we believe that the legislation can be improved in a few ways.

- USGBC supports expanding these rebates to properties including rental properties. Residential management firms of all sizes across the country operate single family properties who could also benefit from this program. Including property managers could have scalable results and would benefit renters (of all income levels) who in most instances have to incur the cost of utility bills.
- USGBC supports adding an additional rebate level at 30%. We believe that an additional incentive level could motivate projects to reach for additional energy savings.
- USGBC encourages a review of the quality assurance provisions in the bill. There may be additional methods and approaches for accountability that should be considered.

### **H.R. 1315: Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act of 2019**

USGBC supports the goals of the Blue Collar to Green Collar Act and the prospect of focused investment to ensure that opportunities to train, qualify for, and fill our nation's clean energy jobs is open to all, regardless of socioeconomic condition. We have several suggestions for the committee to consider to improve the existing legislation.

- USGBC supports further clarify "jobs in energy-related industries, including manufacturing, engineering, construction, and retrofitting jobs" to specifically include facility operations and maintenance, as well.



- USGBC believes that as DOE works on collaboration and report activities that there should be an open and robust stakeholder process including private sector employers and others involved in training and credentials, to identify existing credentials, skill gaps, and growth sectors.

**H.R. 2119: To amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize grants for improving the energy efficiency of public buildings, and for other purposes.**

USGBC works with state and local governments across the country on improving the operational performance of their facilities. We support the goal of H.R. 2119 but believe that the bill could be enhanced in a number of key ways:

- USGBC supports including water efficiency savings as part of the program. Since the original program authorization the federal, state and local government has made impressive progress in integrating energy and water savings to facility improvements. Water efficiency should be added to maximize utility cost savings (and associated emissions savings) for public facilities.
- USGBC supports including third party validation of energy and water efficiency improvements as a condition of program eligibility. LEED, for example, is a widely used verification tool used by government and private sector building owners that has been a helpful method to ensure that building upgrades are designed and operating appropriately. Investor Ready Energy Efficiency (IREE) is another third party certification focused on verification of specific energy efficiency measures, and is used by utilities such as Pacific Gas and Electric.
- USGBC supports adding benchmarking as a condition of program eligibility. Benchmarking building performance data is a critical step for facilities managers or property owners to improve the performance of a property and maintain investments overtime. Tracking energy and water performance over time can result in low cost reductions in utility consumption and financial benefits. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports buildings that use EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager achieve an average energy savings of 7% over three years, which estimates results in a significant financial savings of \$120,000 to over \$4 million.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager. Data trends – Benchmarking and energy savings. 2012 Oct available at: [https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/buildings/tools/DataTrends\\_Savings\\_20121002.pdf](https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/buildings/tools/DataTrends_Savings_20121002.pdf)



Energy Star Portfolio Manager should be used as a common reporting platform, but the use of other tools to provide additional analytic functions and performance comparisons should also be allowable.

- USGBC supports adding competitive criteria that would leverage Federal investment with private financing. Funding mechanism like performance contracting have been successful financing vehicles to improve energy and water efficiency public facilities with minimal or no direct appropriations.

**H.R. 2088, To amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to reauthorize the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program, and for other purposes.**

The funding of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) under the Recovery Act served as an incredibly valuable resource for communities across the country to save taxpayer dollars through energy conservation projects, including programs to expand the use of LEED certification. USGBC was proud to support the creation of the EECBG and believe that it can play a continued role in reducing municipal energy consumption. We support the bill but recommend some additional improvements to the legislation.

- USGBC supports the establishment of a minimum energy savings threshold as part of the program. Given the diversity of eligible activities permitted by the act a performance threshold could serve to protect federal investment.
- USGBC supports clarifying that micro-grids as well as energy storage would be eligible for use under the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 640-2344 if you have any questions or wish to discuss these issues further.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Howard", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is enclosed in a thin rectangular border on the right side.

Bryan Howard  
Legislative Director  
U.S. Green Building Council