



**U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Washington, DC 20515**

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Chairman**

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Ranking Republican Member**

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**SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER**

**TO:** Members of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

**FROM:** Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Staff

**SUBJECT:** Hearing on “Green Buildings Offer Multiple Benefits: Cost Savings, Clean Environment, and Jobs”

**PURPOSE OF THE HEARING**

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management will meet on Thursday, July 16, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. in room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building to review the benefits of “green” buildings and the General Services Administration’s (GSA) unique opportunity to bolster the new “green” economy.

The Subcommittee will examine “green” job training that will help assist GSA in servicing green buildings. The Subcommittee will also examine the requirements of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) (P.L. 110-140) not only for GSA, but also for private sector facilities. EISA mandated a reduction in energy consumption in most Federal agencies and is used as the basis of guidance provided to GSA building managers regarding energy efficiency and conservation.

**BACKGROUND**

The GSA handles an extensive real estate portfolio. GSA owns more than 1,500 Federal buildings totaling 176.5 million rentable square feet of space. GSA leases 177.5 million rentable square feet of space in almost 7,100 leased properties. The functional replacement value of the GSA portfolio is about \$41.7 billion. GSA’s utility costs are expected to be between \$475 and \$500 million in 2009.

## **I. GSA Green Building and Construction**

GSA has an impact not only on the real estate industry, but also on the energy industry through the consumption of energy in Federal facilities. Energy efficiency and conservation promote a healthy environment and help to protect our limited natural resources. The Federal approach to energy efficiency and conservation incorporates many “green” building concepts, such as heating and cooling, use of solar panels, cold-climate windows, warm-climate windows, landscaping, weatherization, compact fluorescent bulbs, use of energy star products, and outdoor lighting. All of these measures impact the consumption of energy and have a significant impact on energy policy.

## **II. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) (P.L. 111-5) appropriated \$5.55 billion for GSA construction and alteration projects, with a focus on “green” building initiatives. On March 31, 2009, the GSA Public Building Service Spending Plan was released and highlighted the spending in the Recovery Act that was dedicated towards transforming Federal buildings into high performance green buildings. The total amount allocated was \$4.3 billion to over 200 projects across the country. The purpose of these funds is to make Federal buildings more energy efficient and, where possible, to use renewable energy generation.

The Public Building Service Spending Plan includes both full and partial modernization projects. The array of projects being deployed by the Public Building Service include the installation of meters for electricity, water, and steam; photovoltaic roofs; cool roof membranes; building tune ups and re-commissioning; heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) retrofits; water conservation projects; and other energy projects.

As GSA moves towards a more “green” building inventory, the Subcommittee will continue to examine GSA’s ability to manage and operate these newly modernized buildings. Today’s hearing will also examine how the Recovery Act is encouraging training for new “green” jobs and how the new “green” economy will potentially affect the commercial real estate market.

### **PRIOR LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY**

The Subcommittee has previously held several hearings specifically on sustainability and green buildings. On May 11, 2007, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing on “Administration Proposals on Climate Change and Energy Independence”. Acting Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers and Chief Administrative Office Daniel Beard testified at this hearing regarding energy efficiency and climate change mitigation initiatives in the Capitol Complex.

On June 20, 2007, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure ordered reported H.R. 2701, the “Transportation Energy Security and Climate Change Mitigation Act of 2007”. The bill included several provisions to promote energy efficiency of the U.S. Capitol Complex and in Federal buildings under GSA’s jurisdiction, custody, and control. The following provisions from H.R. 2701 were incorporated into EISA: sections 431 through 441 are devoted to High Performance Federal Green Buildings; section 436 specifically directs the Administrator of General Services to establish in GSA an Office of Federal High-Performance Green Buildings and to

develop more energy efficient “green” commercial buildings; section 421 creates the Department of Energy Commercial Office of High-Performance Green Buildings; and section 422 established a zero energy commercial building initiative.

On April 1, 2008, the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management held a hearing on the Capitol Complex Master Plan (Plan) and the Capitol Visitor Center, with a focus on transportation, security, greening initiatives, energy, and maintenance. The Plan contains a sustainability component that calls for implementing sustainable operations practices and procedures to reduce the environmental and carbon footprint of the Capitol Complex using renewable and alternative forms of energy, like photovoltaic, wind power, and fuel cells. In addition, the Plan would create and implement policies to encourage green purchasing. Within the Plan, the Sustainability Framework Plan also calls for energy, water, and waste audits for the facilities of the Capitol Complex to promote efficiency, while also pursuing cleaner sources of fuel to reduce the Capitol Complex contribution to air pollution in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

On April 17, 2008, the Subcommittee held a hearing on greening initiatives for Washington, D.C. and the National Capital Region. The hearing focused on current trends and future initiatives regarding facility management, which increasingly includes concepts of sustainability and how “green” buildings contribute to sustainability. The hearing also focused on all aspects of the “green” building process, including construction, renovation, alteration, operation, and maintenance. Finally, the hearing examined several recently constructed “green” buildings in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

**WITNESSES**

**Mr. Kevin Kampschroer**

Acting Director

Office of Federal High-Performance Green Buildings  
General Services Administration

**Dr. Drury Crawley**

Lead Mechanical Engineer

Office of Building Technologies  
U.S. Department of Energy

**Mr. Ray Uhalde**

Senior Advisor

United States Department of Labor

**Mr. James L. Helsel, Jr.**

Treasurer

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