

**Statement Of
The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and
Emergency Management
Hearing On
“Green Buildings Offer Multiple Benefits: Cost Savings, Clean
Environment and Jobs”
July 16, 2009**

I am pleased to welcome our witnesses here to testify to about how “green” building will impact Federal construction, the American economy, and job creation. “Green” building incorporates aspects of energy conservancy in new construction, and it focuses on minimizing the impact of a new building on the environment, while using state of the art technology for energy efficiency. The General Services Administration (GSA) has been tasked with converting several hundred Federal facilities to “green” building with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act)(P.L. 111-5).

Today, we will hear from the GSA Office of High Performing Green Buildings, the Department of Energy Building Technologies, the Department of Labor and the private sector, about the state of “green” building in the United States and how it will affect facilities management. In addition, this hearing will assess the new “green” economy as it begins to produce new jobs and opportunities. I am interested in how the Federal government is partnering with the private sector and States in promoting energy efficiency in new construction, and providing training for new “green” jobs.

The Recovery Act provided \$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.

This hearing is the fourth hearing designed to ensure that best, and most environmentally-sound methods are being used in Federal and commercial building construction. The Federal Government has the largest footprint in the private leasing market in the United States, and has one of the most consistent presences in the construction market. Therefore, the Federal Government has an excellent opportunity to show real leadership in “green” building. My goal is to invigorate the Federal leadership role in energy conservation and renewable technologies, and in the use of other “greening” strategies. Such “greening” strategies include photovoltaic and green roofs, tree planting, and requiring nationally recognized Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or "LEED" standards, or similar standards in all new construction, and when major replacements and repairs are conducted.

I look forward to receiving testimony from today’s panels about how “green” building will affect building construction and the economic landscape going forward.

I thank all of our witnesses for their participation in today's hearing.

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