



Policy Priorities

114th Congress

The High-Performance Buildings Congressional Caucus Coalition (HPBCCC) is a coalition of approximately 200 organizations providing guidance and support to the High-Performance Building Caucus of the U.S. Congress. The Caucus is co-chaired by Rep. David McKinley (R-WV) and Peter Welch (D-VT).

✓ **Pass the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act of 2015 (PL 114-11)**

This law advances high performance buildings by requiring the General Services Administration (GSA) to develop and publish model leasing provisions to encourage building owners and tenants to use greater cost-effective energy and water efficiency measures in commercial buildings. It authorized the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a voluntary Tenant Star program to recognize tenants in commercial buildings that voluntarily achieve high levels of energy efficiency. It also requires the Department of Energy (DOE) to study the feasibility of improving energy efficiency in commercial buildings through the design and construction of spaces with high-performance measures.

1. Reform the Federal Buildings Personnel Act (PL 111-308) and support research relative to the impact of workforce training on building performance

The Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act requires all federal personnel providing building operations and maintenance services to demonstrate competency in their performance areas. The law's premise is simple: when buildings are maintained properly by trained and certified facility managers, they will perform better at lower cost, protect occupant health, safety and productivity and ultimately be worth more at their time of disposition, thereby providing a return on investment to the American taxpayer. The Coalition supports reforming the Act to improve its implementation by GSA as well as supports research related to the impact of workforce training.

2. Authorize EPA's WaterSense Program

WaterSense is a voluntary partnership program created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It offers a simple way for consumers to identify water-efficient products and services. Plumbing products that have earned the WaterSense label have been certified to be at least 20 percent more efficient without sacrificing performance and have been verified by an independent, third party certification laboratory. To date, WaterSense has helped consumers save a cumulative 757 billion gallons of water and over \$14.2 billion in water and energy bills.

3. Extend §179D, §25C and §45L Tax Credits

The "Energy-Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction" (commonly referred to as §179D) expired at the end of 2014. Before its expiration, it provided building owners with a \$1.80/square foot tax deduction for improving the energy performance of building's lighting, heating and cooling, and envelope systems.

The §25C tax credit gives homeowners a \$500 maximum tax credit for improvements to their home's envelope, heating, cooling, and water heating equipment. Credit offers homeowners the right financial incentives to reduce energy waste in their homes, with corresponding benefits for the U.S. economy and the environment.

The "New Energy Efficient Homes" (§45L) credit gave homebuilders \$2,000 for homes that reduced heating and cooling by 50%. Manufactured homes with energy use levels 30% below established levels, or that met ENERGY STAR requirements, were eligible for a \$1,000 credit. Unfortunately, this credit expired at the end of 2013. We urge Congress to retroactively extend these credits.

4. Pass the Nexus of Energy and Water for Sustainability Act of 2015 (S. 1218)

Energy and water are connected to the inputs and outputs of every business. The News Act would coordinate federal energy-water nexus programs to minimize duplication and facilitate collaboration among stakeholders. It tasks the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) to establish a committee to coordinate the activities of all Federal departments and agencies on energy-water nexus issues. It requires identification of all relevant energy-water nexus activities, coordination on effective research and development activities, collaboration to disseminate data that enables better practices, and exploration of public-private partnerships.

5. Pass enhanced provisions that incorporate energy efficiency improvements in the underwriting for home mortgages (SAVE Act)

While energy bills are a significant cost for homeowners, related energy efficiency home improvements are not typically used to assess value and affordability in mortgage underwriting. The “Home Energy Efficiency and Mortgage Risks” study conducted by the University of North Carolina, found that default risks are on average 32 percent lower in energy-efficient homes, controlling for other loan determinants. The lower risks associated with energy efficiency should be taken into consideration when underwriting mortgages. These provisions would allow the use of energy reports, which calculate energy cost savings for home buyers, to help mortgage lenders better assess risk and apply those savings to loan affordability tests (e.g. debt-to-income). These provisions would also create appraisal guidelines to ensure that energy efficient upgrades are reflected in appraisals.

6. Pass the Home Owner Managing Energy Savings Act (HR 2073) or HOMES Act

This legislation would incentivize homeowners to undertake comprehensive energy-saving improvements in their primary residences. By creating a rebate program, the legislation would help homeowners afford specific home energy efficiency retrofits, including a combination of: better windows; insulation; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment; air and duct sealing; and other home improvements that lower energy consumption and cost. If enacted into law, this legislation would save Americans money on their energy bills and boost job creation in some of the hardest hit economic sectors, including the construction and manufacturing sectors.

7. Expand the Use of Energy and Utility Saving Performance Contracts (ESPC)s/(USPC)s

Under this financing mechanism, private sector service companies finance and install new energy and water efficient equipment at minimal or no upfront cost to the Federal government. Federal agencies repay this investment over time with funds saved on utility costs. The private sector contractors measure, verify and guarantee these energy savings. In 2011 the President released a Directive tasking Federal agencies to enter into \$2 billion worth of performance-based contracting for energy savings over a two year period. The Coalitions supports continuation of this directive and urges the administration to extend this program for another five years.

8. Reintroduce the High Performance Federal Buildings Act

High performance buildings increase occupant productivity and comfort, last longer, are safer and more sustainable and cost less to maintain over their life cycles. The High-Performance Federal Buildings Act would give federal agencies the tools they need to design and construct high performance buildings. It requires that federal agencies to ensure that life-cycle costs (i.e., the sum of investment, capital, installation, energy, operating, maintenance, and replacement costs) are considered during the design or major building projects. It would require GSA to establish federal building commissioning standards modeled on existing private sector standards. It would also require the GAO to study and report on the use of integrated design processes and building information modeling (BIM) for the design and construction of federal buildings.

9. Support the effective implementation of OMB Circular No. A-119 and the training of code enforcement officials

The Coalition supports the Federal Government’s implementation of OMB Circular A-119 that directs agencies to use voluntary consensus standards in lieu of government-unique standards. The use of such standards eliminates the cost to the Government of developing its own standards and decreases the cost of procuring goods. It also encourages long-term growth for U.S. enterprises and promotes efficiency and economic competition through the harmonization of standards. The Coalition also supports legislation and policies that promote training of code enforcement officials.

10. Support legislation that improves the performance and quality of buildings by promoting energy/water efficiency, indoor air quality, necessary infrastructure and operations/maintenance research as it relates to the built environment

For more information, please contact the Coalition’s Chair, Dain Hansen, at Dain.Hansen@IAPMO.org. Follow the High Performance Building Congressional Caucus Coalition on Twitter: [@HPBCCC](https://twitter.com/HPBCCC)