



High-Performance Buildings Act H.R. 1259

Housing and environmental problems are inextricably linked and solutions should be too. The High Performance Buildings Act creates incentives and resources for developing housing that is healthy, energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable – and that is affordable to low-income families.

Green Affordable Housing – Why it’s Important

Nearly 17 percent of a low-income family’s earnings are consumed by energy costs and the percentage is on the rise. Additionally, environmental challenges take a disproportionate toll on limited-income families as both asthma rates and blood lead levels are significantly higher among low-income children. Poorly planned development drives good jobs farther from where many low-income people live and has been linked to more traffic congestion, worse pollution and deteriorating health. Building energy efficient and environmentally safe housing (commonly referred to as “green”) addresses a host of problems facing many families and communities such as rising transportation and energy costs, run-down and unhealthy housing, and sprawling, unsustainable development.

High-Performance Buildings Act Provisions

Ensures local communities plan for and support sustainable development

H.R. 1259 requires states and cities to identify and report on strategies for encouraging sustainable development through their Consolidated Plans and annual action plans to HUD, with specific benchmarks such as greater energy efficiency; increased conservation and reuse of resources; and more effective use of existing infrastructure.

Increases local capacity to develop sustainable projects in low-income communities

The bill would provide loan, grant and predevelopment funding to eligible community development organizations to develop affordable housing that incorporates energy efficiency, resource conservation and sustainable techniques in low-income communities. The bill authorizes \$10 million annually over five years, subject to a dollar-for-dollar match from non-governmental sources by grant recipients.

Establishes an institute at the National Science Foundation

The bill would create an institute to research indoor environmental quality and its effect on human health and productivity, as well as encourage the development and deployment of innovative energy-saving technologies.

Bill Status

The High Performance Buildings Act of 2007 (H.R. 1259) was reintroduced in March 2007 by Representatives Adam Smith (D-WA), Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), John Lewis (D-GA) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR). The legislation currently counts 21 cosponsors and has been referred to the House Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Science and Technology.

Industry Support

The High Performance Buildings Act is supported by the American Public Health Association, Enterprise Community Partners, Global Green USA, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the National Center on Healthy Housing and the National Housing Conference.

**TO SIGN ON TO H.R. 1259:
CONTACT KELSEY KNOWLES (REP. SMITH) at 225-8901.**

Enterprise's Green Communities™ Initiative

Building Sustainably

Through Green Communities™, Enterprise has made a \$555 million commitment to build more than 8,500 energy-efficient, healthy and environmentally sustainable homes affordable to low-income families. Green Communities aims to transform the way that the industry thinks about, designs and builds affordable housing.

Ripley Gardens – Minneapolis, MN

Ripley Gardens is the redevelopment of a former maternity hospital and nursing home that closed in 2000. Three historic buildings were restored and three new buildings were added to provide 52 rental apartments and 8 homeownership opportunities for low-income individuals and families. Ripley Gardens includes a wide range of sustainable design elements, including:



- Clean-up of asbestos, lead and petroleum contamination
- Water conserving appliances and fixtures
- Best use of natural and energy efficient lighting, along with passive solar heating in new buildings
- Low-VOC paints, sealants and adhesives
- Storm water retention through the collection of water in three rain gardens
- Adaptive reuse of existing historic structures
- Pedestrian friendly site design, located next to public transportation

Washington Park – Chicago, IL

Washington Park is the redevelopment of the Washington Park YMCA into 63 single-room occupancy apartments for homeless individuals and those at risk of becoming homeless. This adaptive reuse development reflected the community's desire to rehabilitate the building, which closed in 2003, in lieu of demolition. Some of the state-of-the-art sustainable features of Washington Park include:

- Solar/thermal hot water system
- Ground water geothermal heat pump system (a unique feature for a city building)
- Window upgrades
- Energy recovery ventilation system
- Permeable paving in parking area and walkways
- Insulation and other building materials and techniques that will make the building 50 percent more efficient than a traditionally designed building
- Water conserving appliances and fixtures



To learn more about green building and view examples of other affordable developments, visit www.greencommunitiesonline.org, or

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