

Study of the Costs of Energy Efficient Federal Buildings

Issue

The AIA recognizes that a growing body of evidence demonstrates that current building planning, design, construction, and real estate practices contribute to patterns of resource consumption that seriously jeopardize the Nation's environment. We believe that Congress should use its authority over federal buildings to show the way for the private sector in reducing the energy consumption footprint of the built environment.

Indeed, the federal government has made significant strides already. Executive Order 13123 requires each federal agency to reduce energy consumption at its existing facilities by 2010 relative to a 1985 baseline. Last year, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 extended the energy reduction goals for existing federal buildings by mandating that agencies use a new baseline of 2003 energy consumption and achieve additional reductions for existing buildings by the year 2020.

Although some federal agencies have pursued these energy use reduction targets more rigorously than others, the AIA applauds this Federal Government for its leadership in this arena. We believe that more can be done, however. Using currently available technology, new buildings can be constructed to meet much lower energy consumption targets than existing buildings. Before proposing a program for new federal buildings, however, we believe that it is important to know what it would cost the Treasury.

Therefore, the AIA proposes that Congress require the EPA Energy Star Program to do a study of the costs and benefits of setting an aggressive energy consumption limit for new federal buildings constructed or renovated in 2010 and thereafter. Discussions with the Energy Star staff indicate that they have the necessary resources to accomplish this study. The EPA Energy Star program already maintains a comprehensive database relative to federal compliance with the existing building mandates. They also maintain complex software for analyzing energy consumption in most building types. They would be uniquely suited to produce the cost information needed relative to new federal buildings. The results will be useful in drafting energy efficiency legislation for the 110th Congress.

Attached is a copy of the AIA's proposed legislative language for this study.