



# Top 10: How the Golden State Became the Green Building Leader

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"If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development." - Aristotle

Yesterday marked a pivotal moment for state and local green building policy wins. In the state capitol of California, USGBC, in partnership with the eight chapters that make up [USGBC California](#), announced the [Top 10 list of California state and local green building policies](#). The list celebrates decades of leadership by state and local governments to advance green buildings through effective policies and codes.

But it was a stop-the-presses moment when we learned that Gov. Brown issued a sweeping [executive order](#) yesterday - addressing LEED certification, emissions reduction and more - ensuring that California continues to be a national leader in green building. At our reception at the CalEPA LEED Platinum building, we applauded Gov. Brown for his dedication to green building and his lifetime achievement working to protect the environment.

"We must lead by example," said Brown. "Greening the state's buildings will shrink our environmental footprint and save taxpayers millions of dollars."

"This Top 10 list represents California's legacy of leadership that may be unmatched anywhere else in the country," USGBC Vice President of National Policy Jason Hartke said at a press conference unveiling the Top 10. "Because of these policies, California has created something remarkable - where better buildings just aren't enough. In California, they have to be the best buildings. And how wonderful to celebrate these policies on a day Gov. Brown makes another bold addition to the green building policy history."

Elected leaders in California have a tremendous resource in the advocates and members of USGBC California. In many of the contemporary policies on the Top 10 list, USGBC California provided the support needed to pass effective and innovative green building policies. The team continues to work tirelessly in their advocacy efforts to advance green buildings as a priority for economic prosperity, job creation and environmental stewardship.

Over 50 members of USGBC California were in Sacramento today to meet with their legislators and talk about specific bills before the legislature. The commitment and dedication of all individuals involved in USGBC California is truly amazing and a primary reason in developing the California Top 10 list.

One featured policy of the Top 10 list was Sacramento's [Greenwise Action Plan](#) which seeks to transform the region into a green and sustainable economy hub. On hand was special guest Mayor Kevin Johnson who spoke of the city's efforts and was presented with the USGBC California Green Hard Hat award given to individuals who represent leadership in green building and sustainable planning.

Mayor Johnson was not the only elected leader to join in the daylong celebration. At an evening reception closing the daylong activities, California Governor Jerry Brown gave a key note address at a reception held at the [Joe Serna Jr. Cal/EPA Headquarters Building](#), a LEED-EB certified building, with more than 75 green building advocates, leaders, and legislators in attendance. Governor Brown pioneered California's commitment to better buildings with his leadership in passing Title 24 (Part 6) in 1978 which established the first statewide energy code in the nation.

"Governor Brown's participation in the Top 10 events really brought the past into the present," remarked USGBC California Chair Dennis Murphy. "It was Governor Brown's leadership in 1978 that set California on its course of becoming an international green building leader."

The unveiling of the Top 10 list marks the start of a big year for USGBC California. Many are getting ready for [Greenbuild 2012](#) which will be hosted in San Francisco in November. It is expected to be one of the largest Greenbuild conferences ever.

Dan Geiger, executive director of USGBC's Northern California Chapter, summed up what 2012 means for USGBC California and the advancement of green building in the state: "These Top 10 policies exemplify California's culture of invention, innovation, and early adoption that has so powerfully shaped our world. USGBC was conceived in California, and we look forward to welcoming the global green building movement to its birthplace for Greenbuild 2012 this fall."

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