



Senators Urge Deficit Commission to Increase Federal Building Efficiency

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As the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (JSCDR) continues deliberation on how to provide long term reduction to the national debt, nine Senators, led by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI), urged the select committee to adopt a litany of cost saving measures that would make the federal government more effective and reduce federal tax payers' obligation to ineffective building operations.

The [letter](#) sent to the chairs of the select committee highlights the huge opportunity for reducing energy consumption.

"The federal government is the single largest owner of real property in the United States, with the General Services Administration alone owning nearly 2% of all U.S. commercial real estate. The federal government is also the single largest consumer of energy in the United States, spending more than \$24.5 billion on electricity and fuel in 2008 alone."

The letter goes on to outline a number of strategies the federal government should adopt, including building commissioning and updating federal building energy codes as a means of utility reduction and job creation.

In testimony before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee earlier this year, USGBC highlighted commissioning as one of the most cost-effective strategies for reducing utility costs in buildings and encouraged its use toward greening the federal buildings stock. USGBC has also been a supportive of [S. 963](#), the "Reducing Federal Energy Dollars (RFED) Act of 2011," which Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) announced at USGBC's annual [Government Summit](#). The bill, which is supported by [USGBC](#) and [many others](#) in the building community, makes it easier for federal agencies to use private financing tools to pay for energy-efficient building upgrades, increases clarity of agency energy use, and allows for building design updates.

While the end game is uncertain, it is good to see that lawmakers are advancing common sense ideas that are good for energy efficiency and good for the bottom line of the federal government.



Bryan Howard
Legislative Director



USGBC staff

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