Energy Efficiency in the States in 2012: Will You Help Your State Compete for Top Rank?

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If you've ever wondered if government policy and advocacy can actually make a difference, consider this: Despite what you may often read in the papers, state governments are plowing ahead on making energy efficiency a reality. And as USGBC mentioned in a recent report, all states are doing something. That just doesn't happen if no one is fighting for it.

Today, the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy released its 2011 Energy Scorecard which shows significant improvements in several states and, maybe most interesting, California sliding to #2 behind Massachusetts as #1 in energy efficiency. The Commonwealth's Stretch Energy Code – which has been adopted by nearly 50% of all Massachusetts localities – has played an important role, alongside many other state programs. (This is not to say there aren't a lot of great things going on in the Golden State... more on that later).

One of the six energy policy metrics in ACEEE's scorecard is state policy for building energy codes. Importantly, "Twenty-nine (29) states have either adopted or have made significant progress toward the adoption of the latest energy-saving building codes for homes and commercial properties - up from twenty in 2010 and ten in 2009." This is a clear endorsement of minimum standards for building energy efficiency, and a vital step in the right direction if we're to further extend fundamental protections from other non-acute threats to human and environmental health.

This rapid increase in building energy code adoption, and the advancement of other state policy initiatives (like transportation policies, appliance efficiency standards, utility and public benefits programs) has been championed by advocates of energy efficiency and green building. USGBC's community of advocates has been behind many of these policy advancements. Have you?

If you attended Greenbuild earlier this month, you heard from *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman (see 30th minute) that we very clearly still have a lot of work to do to get our nation's leaders on board with our vision of a sustainable future – and we need your help! Are you involved with your local USGBC chapter? Tell them that you want to get involved in their advocacy and outreach activities. Do you know who your elected officials are at the local, state and congressional levels? Let them know why energy efficient, green buildings and communities matter to you, and why they should be embraced in smart public policy.

Setting sights on 2012, will you join us in our campaigns to drive green building policy that rewards responsibility, embraces a sense of urgency and catalyzes change? Together we can compel even further competition in the states in our collective pursuit of a healthier, safer, more efficient and prosperous future.

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1 comment

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Jeremy Sigmon — 2 years 36 weeks ago
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I'm a bit delayed in posting this, but for the sake of continuity, here's ACEEE's energy efficiency state scorecard for 2012. MA is still on top.
http://www.aceee.org/node/3078?id=5121

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