

An America Built to Last: The Five Wins for Green Buildings in the SOTU

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This week I watched the President's State of the Union address with a notepad of buzzwords ready to take down some tallies. I'm certainly not the only person who keeps track keywords mentioned by the President in his annual speech. Not surprisingly, the President mentioned "jobs" more than 40 times in the 90 minute speech. I was also pleased that he referenced "energy" 20 times. Keeping track of my favorite hot topics became overwhelming only 30 minutes in, but in this case, too much of a good thing is a good thing.

I'm going to take some artistic license with the President's SOTU title and emphasize the word "built." Everything that we do to promote a sustainable built environment supports the long-term economic and environmental health of the nation. We cannot support our society if we deplete our natural resources at an unsustainable rate. We cannot maintain economic prosperity and resiliency without long-term, high quality jobs.

The ideas presented in Tuesday's address were summarized in an eight page action plan titled, "[Blueprint for an America Built to Last](#)." Another building allusion is very appropriate given the compatible goals of the President's action plan and long-term benefits of green buildings. Many of these action items and goals are things that we are already doing with great success. The green building industry is *already* shaping an America built to last.

Finally, I've compiled a list of five wins for green building from the President's prepared remarks:

- "Join me in a national commitment to train two million Americans with skills that will lead directly to a job."
- "Building this new energy future should be just one part of a broader agenda to repair America's infrastructure. So much of America needs to be rebuilt. We've got crumbling roads and bridges. A power grid that wastes too much energy."
- "In the next few weeks, I will sign an Executive Order clearing away the red tape that slows down too many construction projects. But you need to fund these projects. Take the money we're no longer spending at war, use half of it to pay down our debt, and use the rest to do some nation building right here at home."
- "There's never been a better time to build, especially since the construction industry was one of the hardest-hit when the housing bubble burst."

And last but not least..

- "Of course, the easiest way to save money is to waste less energy. So here's another proposal: Help manufacturers eliminate energy waste in their factories and give businesses incentives to upgrade their buildings. Their energy bills will be \$100 billion lower over the next decade, and America will have less pollution, more manufacturing, and more jobs for construction workers who need them. Send me a bill that creates these jobs."

I couldn't have said it better myself.

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