



# Obama Budget Charts Bold Course for Green Building Priorities

Published on 14 Feb 2012 | Written by **Bryan Howard** | Posted in [Advocacy and policy](#)

On Monday, President Obama released an ambitious \$3.8 trillion budget for fiscal year 2013 that seeks to pump billions of dollars into the economy through clean energy and infrastructure improvements, while seeking to eliminate existing incentives for oil and gas and ending tax cuts for those making more than \$250,000.

As part of the Better Buildings Initiative, a 10-year initiative to make non-residential buildings 20 percent more energy efficient, the budget aims to re-design the current tax deduction for commercial buildings 179D to a credit, and change the eligibility program to cover other taxable entities such as real estate investment trusts (REITS). This budget [proposal](#) mirrors a 2012 request made by the Obama Administration, which has yet to get traction on the hill. USGBC has been working with others in the real estate and environmental community to [advance solutions](#) to improve the existing 179D so it is encouraging that the Administration continues to show support for improving the deduction.

The budget also includes billions of dollars to modernize at least 35,000 schools across the country, including energy-efficiency upgrades and comprehensive, green retrofits. [This proposal](#) was included in the President's American Jobs Act last year but has yet to be considered by Congress.

Some additional highlights include:

- Approximately \$100 million increase for the Building Technologies Program at the Department of Energy (DOE). The program accelerates innovative, efficient building technologies and practices through applied research and development, and advances the use of energy-efficient and technologies and practices in residential and commercial buildings
- A \$10 million increase for the Energy Information Administration (EIA) at DOE. EIA is the home of consumption surveys such as the Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS) and the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS), which is specifically charged with revitalizing the energy consumption data program to include benchmarking and performance measurement of energy efficiency
- A \$50 million increase at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Choice Neighborhoods/HOPE VI program, which leverages private sector dollars to transform existing blighted public housing into vibrant and livable communities

While it isn't all good news and it is too early to know how Congress will act on the budget, it's good to see that there is an effort to rebuild our communities and our economy while making long-term investments in innovation and infrastructure in core 21st century technologies.



**Bryan Howard**  
Legislative Director



USGBC staff

0 comments

[Leave a comment](#)

Leave a comment

Don't have an account? [Create one](#)

You must be signed in to leave a comment.

Email

Password

**SIGN IN**