Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Advances USGBC-Supported Building Efficiency Measure

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On Thursday, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee took the next step in advancing key building efficiency legislation by reporting favorably S. 1000, the "Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act," introduced by Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio) to the Senate.

The measure, which passed on a wide bipartisan majority of 18-3, includes many similar proposals advanced in the "American Clean Energy and Leadership Act of 2009" (ACELA) from last Congress. The broad-based bill includes advances in building energy codes, creates new loan programs and expands existing ones to encourage efficiency upgrades, as well as boosts energy conservation within the federal government. To date, there are over 100 companies and organizations that support the legislation, including USGBC.

During committee consideration the bill was modified in a few key ways through a "manager's amendment:"

1. The provisions dealing with building loan guarantees were clarified to ensure applicability to private commercial and multifamily buildings;
2. The section regarding appliances, which is already a standalone bill, was removed;
3. The title pertaining to energy efficiency administered by the Rural Utility Service (RUS) at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was also removed because of committee jurisdiction.

In a statement Senator Shaheen hailed the committee's action.

"With rising energy costs and too many Americans still looking for jobs, our country can't afford to wait to pass a comprehensive energy efficiency strategy. This bipartisan plan will make our economy more competitive and create private sector jobs today, while also addressing our nation's energy challenges."

The bipartisan passage of this legislation is a good sign that it might see the Senate floor but a timeline for consideration by the full Senate was not announced.

More information on the hearing »

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