

Sen. Carper Announces Act to Improve Federal Buildings

Published on **11 May 2011**

Written by [Bryan Howard](#)

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With the backdrop of USGBC's eighth annual Government Summit, Senator Tom Carper (DE) announced the introduction of the Reducing Federal Energy Dollars Act of 2011, which aims to improve the operations of owned and leased federal buildings.

"Given the tremendous budget challenges we face, we need to look at every nook and cranny of the federal government for savings," said Sen. Carper, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee that oversees Federal Financial Management. "Reducing the enormous amount of money we spend on energy use in the federal government is one clear way we can cut costs. President Obama has set clear and ambitious energy reduction goals for federal agencies and we need to make sure they have all the tools and resources they need to reach them. Already, federal agencies are pursuing many ideas and technologies to reduce the amount of energy they consume, and adopt renewable energy such as solar panels on top of federal buildings. These proven technologies have resulted in financial savings that have more than paid for the initial financial investment. My bill would not only help agencies save money but also allow the federal government to lead by example in becoming more environmentally sustainable and less reliant on foreign sources of energy."

The bill aims to expand utility savings through a number of strategies utilized by some government agencies and by private industry. For example the bill ensures that federal buildings and future federal leases go through commissioning or "tune-ups" on essential building systems to maximize performance. In recent [testimony before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee](#) USGBC highlighted commissioning as arguably the single most cost-effective strategy for reducing utility costs in buildings today and encouraged its use as a key strategy toward greening the federal buildings stock.

The bill would also makes common-sense improvements to existing laws to ensure that the federal government can respond to challenges in improving existing buildings and in the construction of new facilities. Among other provisions the Reducing Federal Energy Dollars Act of 2011 would also allow agencies to review and update project plans that may have been sidelined due to lack of funding. This ensures that projects are utilizing the most up-to-date technologies and practices in enhancing federal facilities.

In an endorsement letter from USGBC Vice President of National Policy Jason Hartke praised the bill's introduction.

"The Reducing Federal Energy Dollars Act of 2011 utilizes untapped opportunities to save a significant amount of taxpayer money by making our nation's federal buildings more efficient. We should seize this opportunity and take the steps necessary to reduce our resource consumption and the cost to taxpayers."

Introduction of this legislation is the most recent effort of Carper's to enhance the performance of federal buildings. In the 111th Congress Carper was the Senate's chief advocate for the Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act of 2010" The bill, which became law last year, ensures that the workforce performing duties federal facilities have demonstrated training to perform tasks like operations and maintenance.

[Read Sen. Carper's motivation and intent behind the bill on his Huffington Post blog »](#)

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