



Final Budget Deal is Still Thin on Important Funding for Green Building

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Late last week, in an effort to avoid the first shutdown of the federal government in 16 years, the Obama administration and Congress agreed on a framework to fund the government for the rest of the fiscal year 2011 (FY11). The broader details of the legislation (scheduled for a vote later this week) have only recently been released.

The bill contains broad spending reductions in virtually every government agency and enterprise. In total, the Continuing Resolution (CR) cuts \$38.5 billion compared to the funding from 2010. Some reductions are particularly severe, including those in the area of green building, and should concern green building consumers and advocates. Below is a brief list of these cuts:

Federal Building Fund at the General Services Administration (GSA)

- *Cuts:* Funding reduced by \$1.6 billion below FY2010 levels. The CR provides \$82 million for construction and \$280 million for repair of federal buildings overall.
- *Damage:* While this gives GSA some flexibility to continue multi-year construction and renovation projects, funding reductions of nearly 20% will have a dire effect on private sector construction and will impede the ability of the federal government to improve efficiency in their buildings.

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the Department of Energy (EERE)

- *Cuts:* Funding reduced by \$408 million below FY2010 levels, with \$1.835 billion allocated in total.
- *Damage:* As home of the Building Technologies Program (BTP), these cuts to the EERE could harm the development of technologies and practices that make buildings, systems and components more efficient, and less costly to consumers.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)


- *Cuts:* Funding reduced by over \$150 million below FY 2010 levels for the HOPE VI program, with only \$100 million allocated in total.
- *Damage:* Cuts to this program will limit the ability to leverage private sector finance to transform existing distressed or blighted public housing into vibrant and livable communities.

Sustainable Communities Initiative

- *Cuts:* Funding reduced by \$50 million below FY 2010 levels, with \$100 million allocated in total.
- *Damage:* This office supports a joint initiative with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and provides grants to communities to better integrate transportation, land use and housing efforts. A 33% reduction will impact these programmatic improvements substantially.

A full summary of the bill is located [here](#).

These cuts are by and large an improvement over the House of Representatives proposal (H.R. 1), but the effect that they will have on private sector construction is nonetheless chilling: limiting private sector investment in infrastructure and building improvements and hampering future innovation in the building industry won't do much to create jobs, save energy and save money, the very things that we need the most.



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