



# USGBC Testifies on Strategies to Increase Efficiency in the Federal Government and Promote the Better Buildings Initiative

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Doug Gatlin, U.S. Green Building Council's Vice President of LEED, testified before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on the how the General Services Administration (GSA) can eliminate waste, cut costs and improve environmental performance through improved building management and purchasing.

"With an inventory of more than 7,000 government-leased and 1,500 government-owned buildings - representing more than 354 million square feet of space nationwide - GSA has an extraordinary capacity to reduce the environmental impact of our nation's buildings and save taxpayer dollars," said Gatlin.

Joined by GSA Administrator Martha Johnson and other members of the real estate and business community, Gatlin provided Senators with a number of options to improve environmental performance while decreasing costs to taxpayers. He outlined a number of strategies including consistent funding to update, maintain and commission existing buildings.

"... commissioning costs, on average, \$0.30/ft<sup>2</sup> and generates between \$0.25-\$0.30/ft<sup>2</sup> in whole building energy savings for a payback time of 1.1 years, and a 91% return on investment (ROI). This type of commissioning is arguably the single most cost effective strategy for reducing utility costs in buildings today."

Jeffrey DeBoer, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the [Real Estate Roundtable](#), also joined Gatlin in calling for changes to the Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction (179D) to make it more useable for existing buildings.

"As GSA develops its program to release excess properties into the marketplace, Congress should take complementary steps to enable retrofits of those assets by re-designing section 179D," said DeBoer.

Changes to the tax deduction along with a number of other programs to spur commercial building efficiency were included in the recent [Better Buildings Initiative](#) (BBI) announced by the President Obama earlier this year.

To watch the full archived hearing or to read the full testimony [click here](#).

For a detailed summary of BBI [click here](#).

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