



# USGBC and the Better Buildings Initiative: How Do We Get Started Sooner?

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Pretend you are the President of the United States for a minute. The economy has pulled out of the recession, but everyone is cautious about the fragility of the recovery. To get the energy we need, we're razing mountains in Appalachia and sending billions for oil to undemocratic, unfriendly governments in the Middle East. And last summer oil drilling trashed the Gulf of Mexico and the state economies that depend on it.

So what do you do? Double down on the status quo and sacrifice more of your own country to mining and drilling? Or use less energy so you don't have to? Seems like an easy choice, but you wouldn't think so from listening to some members of Congress.

But where are the opportunities to use less energy? According to [McKinsey and Company](#), most of the \$1.2 Trillion (!!!) efficiency opportunity is in buildings. And where are the largest efficiency opportunities in the building sector? Well, the biggest buildings of course. Last month, President Obama announced an initiative designed to do just that.

The Better Buildings Initiative seeks to cut energy consumption in commercial buildings by 20 percent, while saving businesses \$40 billion...per year! That's money that will be spent on salaries and supplies rather than in just keeping the (inefficient) lights on. [Click here for a section by section explanation of BBI.](#)

Of course the USGBC community is thrilled to have the President add commercial buildings to his overall efficiency focus. Many of the elements of the Initiative are actions we have long championed (see our report of [Executive Authorities](#) available to encourage energy efficiency in commercial buildings, or our memo on our [top 3 priorities](#) sent in just a few days before the announcement, and we look forward to working with the White House and Congress to make them a reality. As our CEO, Rick Fedrizzi, said during the White House call that followed the announcement, the only question USGBC member companies and chapter members have, is "How can we get started sooner?"

[Click here for the detailed breakdown of BBI.](#)

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