

Making Benchmarking Mainstream

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In January, USGBC launched its second advocacy campaign of 2012, *Mainstream Benchmarking*. Through this campaign we will advocate for policies that will bring the benefits of energy benchmarking to all commercial buildings.

So why benchmarking? Why now?

The answer is simple. The green building movement has made many technologies and processes standard practice by building new LEED buildings and by retrofitting existing buildings; however, many spaces are not considered energy efficient. There are low and no cost opportunities to stop this energy waste still abound.

Benchmarking is the process of quantifying a building's energy consumption and comparing it to a standard to see how it is performing. The process shows whether or not a building is using too much energy comparatively or if it is a leader in energy performance. Without benchmarking, those low and no-cost opportunities to save energy will never be found. We have the free tools available to start making benchmarking part of standard building operation.

That's why we are asking our advocates to start a conversation in their area about benchmarking. Many leading cities have launched benchmarking initiatives, and are already beginning to reap the benefits. In the past few years, several local and state governments currently have [codified benchmarking policies](#). Momentum around benchmarking is growing.

One example is New York City. The Urban Green Council worked closely with the Mayor's office and the commercial real estate industry to help iron out the details of [Local Law 84](#) requiring benchmarking and disclosure of energy use in New York City's commercial buildings. This law is a cornerstone of [PlanNYC](#) and is a great example of how USGBC advocates can work with local governments to effect positive change through education, advocacy, and support. Visit [Urban Green's benchmarking site](#) for more information and check out the [benchmarking section of their blog](#).

The *Mainstream Benchmarking* campaign comes on the heels of USGBC's first campaign roll out of 2012 – [Leadership with LEED](#). Both campaigns highlight the leadership roles policymakers play in promoting better building practices. On one side, governments can adopt policies that ensure all public buildings are designed to be more efficient, saving taxpayer dollars. On the other, governments can push commercial buildings to benchmark so that energy waste is eliminated.

Check back for updates on our residential advocacy efforts through the Highlight Green Homes Campaign, next to be unveiled. To find out more about these and all our 2012 campaigns, visit www.usgbc.org/campaigns. As always, if you want to get involved in USGBC advocacy, [let me know](#).

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