

Senate Panel Signals Support for Commercial Building Energy Survey

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On Wednesday there was a good sign coming out of the Senate Appropriations Committee for the continued efforts to restart the Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS), the national survey that gathers statistical energy information on U.S. commercial buildings at the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

As part of H.R. 2354, the fiscal year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations, as reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee, will provide \$105 million for EIA. This is a funding increase of approximately \$10 million from 2011. The Committee also provided guidance to EIA recommending that work on a new CBECS survey beginning in 2012.

As some know, CBECS is widely important for those in the real estate and building community and is the data backbone of important programs such as LEED for Existing Buildings and ENERGY STAR. The survey had encountered a perfect storm of problems over the last six months. As part of this year's budget reductions passed by congress, EIA's funding was cut by 14 percent, forcing EIA to suspend its work on CBECS for 2011. This came on the heels of EIA not releasing the 2007 survey because of design and survey flaws.

USBGC along with more than 70 groups sent a [letter](#) to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees urging that Congress restore funding for the Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS). The letter was coordinated by USBGC, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Real Estate Roundtable (RER) and members of the [Real Estate Network for Energy and Climate Policy](#) (RENECP), a network that supports comprehensive clean energy and climate policies that advance building and location efficiency.

These are all good signs as USBGC and other community stakeholders continue to work with the Congress and EIA to begin CBECS again in 2012.

Excerpt from [Committee Report](#):

ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

Appropriations, 2011: ¹ \$95,409,000

Budget estimate, 2012: 123,957,000

House allowance: 105,000,000

Committee recommendation: 105,000,000

¹ Does not include rescission of \$86,300,000 under Public Law 112–10.

The Committee recommends \$105,000,000 for the Energy Information Administration. The Committee notes that the Energy Information Administration has announced that it will not release the 2007 Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS) due to data and sample flaws resulting from the survey method employed. The 2003 CBECS remains the most current survey of commercial building efficiency used as the baseline for The Energy Star program at U.S. EPA, the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, and others. In light of the age of the 2003 survey and the failure of the 2007 study, the Committee recommends that the Energy Information Administration complete a new Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey during fiscal year 2012.

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