

House Appropriators Signal Support for Commercial Building Energy Survey

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Last week brought good news in the efforts to restart the Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS), a national survey that gathers statistical information on U.S. commercial buildings, at the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

CBECS, a survey that is not widely known outside of the building industry, has a huge impact on the real estate community as it is the data backbone of important programs such as LEED for Existing Buildings and ENERGY STAR. The budget compromise for this year cut EIA's funding by 14 percent. Because of the size and the timing of the budget cut, EIA chose to suspend its work on CBECS for 2011.

As part of H.R. 2354, the fiscal year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations, EIA is slated to receive nearly \$10 million more than they did in 2011. During the consideration of the bill, Representatives Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Russ Carnahan (D-MO) clarified with Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) and Ranking Member Peter Visclosky (D-IN) that such an increase would be utilized for CBECS. The [exchange between members](#) was beneficial for a couple of key reasons:

First, and most importantly, it indicated the committee expects the increased funds at EIA to support CBECS.

Secondly, the leadership of the subcommittee went on to discuss the importance of CBECS to the commercial building industry.

"...the committee understands the importance of this program. The CBECS data is essential not just for Federal programs to reduce energy use like EPA's Energy Star for buildings and DOE's building technologies program, but for private sector efforts like the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED rating system as well," commented Ranking Member Visclosky (IN) during the discussion.

USBGC along with more than 70 organizations, companies and advocacy organizations 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 drafted and circulated 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 of professionals who support comprehensive clean energy and climate policies that advance building and location efficiency.

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