Greener Buildings: An Early Priority for 113th Congress

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Chair of Senate Public Works Committee Sends a Strong Signal by Introducing Federal Building Efficiency Bill

On the first day of the 113th Congress, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, sent a strong message about the committee's focus by introducing several measures, including legislation aimed at promoting energy efficiency in federal buildings.

S. 52, the Promoting Efficiency and Savings in Government Act, is targeted legislation that compels the U.S. General Services Administration to expand existing efforts and identify further efficiency improvements in buildings it owns and leases, and report to Congress and the public on energy and cost savings associated with these upgrades. The bill also draws on recommendations made by USGBC and over a dozen other organizations in a 2012 report on improving the economic and resource benefits of existing federal building programs.

This type of targeted legislative strategy found traction in the last Congress with the passage of the American Energy Manufacturing Technical Corrections Act, so there is some room for optimism that Congress can again find consensus on these common-ground public policy items that help save money for taxpayers and the federal government.

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