



Guiding Green Building Policy

Government Initiatives that Provide Insight and Oversight on Green Building Policy

The many benefits of healthier, more efficient, lower impact buildings have compelled governments across the country to formally and regularly pursue these outcomes through public policy. The overview below highlights the variety of approaches that state and local governments have taken to inform and oversee green building policy, demonstrating the valuable role that state and local governments play in growing the green building marketplace.

Approach: Established 'Committee'

Sometimes initiated by a chief executive, other times by a legislative body and other times by a grassroots effort that gets officially recognized, this approach establishes a longer-term role for a mixed group of public servants and community volunteers to provide regular input, feedback and recommendations about green building policy in the state or locality.

- ❖ City of Scottsdale, Ariz.: "Green Building Advisory Committee." Initially a grassroots effort in 1997 that combined a loose affiliation of interested community members and city staff, the Green Building Advisory Committee grew in importance as the City's 1997 green building ordinance began its phases of implementation, review and updates. By 2011, its final year, the Committee had been officially named a subcommittee of the Environmental Quality Advisory Board, which officially reported to City Council. [View the [Committee's archived website](#) and the [City's Green Building Program](#) page.]
- ❖ Washington, D.C.: "Green Building Advisory Council." As provided in the 2006 [Green Building Act](#), the District Department of the Environment established an advisory council to monitor the implementation of the Act and to advise the Mayor, Council and staff on ongoing implementation and policy matters related to the Act. Some responsibilities include reporting on effectiveness of green building policies, proposing revisions to the policy or construction codes and promotion of green building education. [Visit the Council's [2007-2011 Report](#) and also the District's [green building page](#).]
- ❖ State of Maryland: "Maryland Green Building Council." First established in 2007, the Council (which is not officially affiliated with USGBC), evaluates high performance building technology and practice and offers recommendations on cost-effective green building technologies that could be incorporated into State facilities. The Council also compiles a list of building categories in which green building technologies should not be used. The Council issued this [2011 Report](#). [View the [Council's website](#).]
- ❖ State of Rhode Island: "Green Building Advisory Committee." Pursuant to the 2009 Rhode Island [Green Buildings Act](#), the state Department of Administration was required to establish a Green Buildings Advisory Committee to support the implementation of the Act through education, assessment and policy recommendations. [View the [Committee's resource page](#) on the Building Code Commission's website.]

Approach: Integrated 'Perspective'

As some programs and initiatives have matured, states and localities are beginning to integrate green building into the way that the state makes building-related decisions. This approach incorporates green building and sustainability as a critical perspective – like fire, life safety, accessibility and others – into the fabric of government decision making.

- ❖ State of California: "Green Building Perspective Seat." A 2012 Assembly bill, [AB 930](#), established a critical and permanent perspective seat on the State's Building Standards Commission. Overseeing the nation's first statewide green building code, the legislature determined that the Commission required a voice for the strong sustainability viewpoint when making decisions about the content and scope of the state building code. [Visit the [Building Standards Commission's website](#).]



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Approach: Staffed 'Program Office'

Often an outgrowth of one of the above efforts that relies more heavily on input from volunteers from the community with expert perspectives, this approach is increasingly common among state and local governments that commit to providing more than policy advice. This approach also supports the community through green building information, resources and services.

- ❖ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: "Governor's Green Government Council." Established in 1998 by [Executive Order #1](#), the Council coordinates environmental responsibility (including green building) across state agencies and promotes its inclusion in planning, operations and policymaking. The Council also serves as a clearinghouse for public information on green government. [Visit the [Council's green building page](#).]
- ❖ Arlington County, Va.: "Green Building Program." Originally adopted in 1999 and updated in 2003 and 2009, the Green Building Program administers the [green building incentive](#) and serves as an information clearinghouse for the real estate community and the public. [Visit the [Green Building Program website](#).]
- ❖ State of Washington: "Green Building Group." Originally initiated in 2004 by Department of Ecology staff within the Solid Waste Program to fill a public service need, the Green Building Group became an important resource center and promotional voice for green buildings across the state. While the office and its resources remain, recent funding constraints have downsized the group's focus to material and resource impacts across their lifecycle. [View the [Green Building Group's webpage](#).]

Approach: Temporary 'Task Force'

Whether initiated by the legislative body or by the executive, this approach tends to be a temporary, task-based initiative to answer a question and provide a recommendation.

- ❖ City of Boston, Mass.: "Green Building Task Force." Launched by the Mayor in the summer of 2003, the Task Force leveraged the expertise of a number of local experts that, in their subsequent report, strengthened the City's commitments to green public buildings and laid the groundwork for the nation's first adoption of LEED into its zoning ordinances. The City's Environmental & Energy Services Cabinet continues to advance high-performance buildings and has established Boston as a national leader in green building activity. [View the [2004 Task Force report](#) and the [City's green building page](#).]
- ❖ City and County of Sacramento, Calif.: "Green Building Task Force." The City and County of Sacramento in collaboration with Valley Vision/Green Capital Alliance convened a public stakeholder process to conduct research, gather input and work collaboratively to develop practical and innovative recommendations for the city/county region. The Task Force, a one-time effort that followed a city-developed sustainable master plan, issued a set of [Recommendations in 2010](#). [View the [City's green building page](#) and the [Green Sacramento County page](#).]
- ❖ State of Illinois: "LEED Task Force." Passed in 2009, House Joint Resolution 45 called for the establishment of a task force to author a report to recommend programmatic, financial and other resources that could foster sustainability initiatives on a larger scale in Illinois schools. [View USGBC Illinois' [webpage](#) on the effort and the [recommendations](#) that followed in 2011.]

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