



An Update from the US Green Building Council

March 2009

Implementing the Economic Recovery Plan

USGBC is a resource in the work to ensure green building is a cornerstone of the new economy

As federal, state and local governments work together to rebuild and re-energize our economy through the economic recovery package, the U.S. Green Building Council is focused on supporting the implementation of the federal investment in green and energy-efficient building. Green building is among the cornerstones of a clean energy economy. The building industry makes up 14.7% of U.S. GDP and uses 40% of our nation's energy. Greening our existing buildings would result in an estimated savings of \$160 billion in energy costs, while creating green jobs that can't be exported. And that's good news for our nation's economy, state and local government budgets, business bottom lines and the financial well-being of American families.

While USGBC was front and center in advocating for an unprecedented commitment to green solutions in the economic stimulus package recently signed by President Obama, the next challenge is even more welcome: serving as a resource for USGBC members as they help their states and local communities realize the full economic and environment benefit of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

We all have a stake in the new green economy, and professionals in every sector of the green building industry are well-positioned to play a part in the implementation of the federal stimulus plan. Some \$9 billion is designated to address public safety and other government services, which may include school modernization, renovation and repair consistent with a recognized green building rating system. For homes professionals, the Act provides \$5 billion for the federal Weatherization Assistance Program, which provides assistance to low-income families in weatherizing and improving the energy efficiency of their homes. It provides another \$4 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund, which provides funds to public housing agencies nationwide for the development, funding and modernization of public housing developments. And firms and professionals working with commercial and

institutional buildings can look to become involved with projects under the \$5.55 billion granted to the federal General Services Administration for federal buildings, including \$4.5 billion for measures to make GSA facilities “high-performance green buildings,” as defined by the 2007 energy law.

USGBC is a resource for you to learn how to be a part of our nation’s recovery.

» **For individuals and firms:** Find information on finding a green job, using LEED Professional Accreditation and USGBC’s educational offerings to position yourself as an in-demand green worker, and the latest news and research on a green-built economy at [USGBC’s green jobs page](#).

» **For local and state governments:** Learn how to implement the economic stimulus plan at the [Green Economic Recovery Resources](#) page. USGBC has created tools for exploring the possibilities created by the stimulus plan and an upcoming Stimulus Plan Implementation webcast series.

The potential for green building to create new jobs is astounding: As many as 2 million jobs could be created under a green economic recovery plan envisioned by the Center for American Progress. In fact, according to an October 2008 report from the U.S. Conference of Mayors & Mayors Climate Protection Center, there were 750,000 green jobs in the U.S. economy in 2006 – a number projected to grow to 4.2 million over the next 30 years. If we all play our part, 4.2 million can be an understatement, and green jobs will lie at the heart of America’s economic revival.

In fact, research from diverse sources examining the interest in green buildings among a wide range of Americans paints the same picture: The future of our built environment clearly centers on energy efficiency, water reduction, systems that encourage cleaner indoor air, the use of recycled and more sustainably developed materials, and communities that coexist with their environments. Across the country, Americans are recognizing that sustainability is key to a prosperous future, and the triple bottom line – environmental responsibility, economic prosperity and social equity – is imperative as we move forward.

- According to Turner Construction Company’s “Green Building Barometer,” 75% of commercial real estate executives – including developers, rental building owners, brokers, architects, engineers and others – say the credit crunch will not discourage them from building green. In fact, 83% said they would be “extremely” or “very” likely

to seek LEED certification for buildings they are planning to build within the next three years.

- 70% of homebuyers are more or much more inclined to buy a green home over a conventional home in a down housing market, according to McGraw-Hill Construction's 2008 SmartMarket Report, "The Green Home Consumer." That number is 78% for those earning less than \$50,000 a year, showing the increasing accessibility of green buildings to all members of our society. In fact, 56% of respondents who bought green homes in 2008 earn less than \$75,000 per year; 29% earn less than \$50,000.
- More than 80% of commercial building owners have allocated funds to green initiatives this year, according to "2008 Green Survey: Existing Buildings," a survey jointly funded by Incisive Media's Real Estate Forum and GlobeSt.com, the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) International and USGBC. Some 45% plan to increase sustainability investments in 2009.
- LEED-certified projects are directly tied to more than \$10 billion of green materials, according to a Greener World Media study on green building. That could reach more than \$100 billion by 2020, contributing to a vibrant industry that could drive an economic recovery.
- The Center for American Progress and the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, in a September 2008 study, found that a national green economic recovery program investing \$100 billion over 10 years in six infrastructure areas would create 2 million new jobs. The investments would include retrofitting existing buildings to improve energy efficiency and investing in wind power, solar power and next-generation biofuels.