

April 22, 2009

Chairman David Obey
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-218 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Daniel Inouye
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-131 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Jerry Lewis
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Thad Cochran
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-146A U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

Reducing the energy use of buildings requires the availability of a robust database of building energy data. As corporations look to reduce their energy costs and policymakers look to reduce the nation's energy use and address global warming, buildings can provide a significant source of energy savings. The Energy Information Administration's Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS) and the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS) serve as the baseline for many initiatives designed to reduce energy consumption in both new and existing buildings. The importance of these data will continue to grow as the nation and the building community focus on reducing energy use and addressing climate change. However, in recent years EIA has needed to reduce the frequency and breadth of these surveys due to reduced budgets. As we look to EIA data as the basis for current and future programs it is essential that these data are robust and collected frequently.

As you consider future EIA funding, the undersigned organizations respectfully request that you provide EIA with sufficient funding commensurate with the importance of the products they produce--\$200 million in each of the next four fiscal years to cover all of EIA's critical programs.

Currently, limited data exist to actually understand the energy use associated with individual buildings and the factors that affect that energy use. Despite increased focus on improving the energy efficiency of new buildings, existing buildings represent the greatest source of energy use within the sector. Increased focus on the energy use of existing buildings will result in a greater understanding of how building design ultimately affects the energy used during operation. Understanding this correlation can result in the development of better buildings, inform operations and maintenance practices, and provide input to the standards development process.

For its energy consumption surveys, EIA currently projects that the 2009 RECS, 2010 MECS, and 2011 CBECS will cost roughly \$28 million to complete (or about \$7 million on an annual basis). Increasing the sample size by 50 percent for both RECS and CBECS would cost about \$ 3 million and \$7 million respectively. To conduct RECS and CBECS on the triennial cycle as initially required is estimated to cost an additional \$10 million and \$14 million respectively per cycle.

Programs with expanded survey designs and frequency would be a vast improvement over current programs because they would permit more complex analysis of key indicators of energy use, publications of more building types, and more accuracy for secondary uses of the data by other Federal agencies.

Sincerely,

American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE)
Institute for Market Transformation
Ecobuild America
Architecture 2030
Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)
American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC)
International Facility Management Association (IFMA)
Sustainable Buildings Industry Council (SBIC)
American Institute of Architects (AIA)
Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance (SPFA)
Energy and Environmental Study Institute (EESI)
Association for Facilities Engineering (AFE)
Glass Association of North America (GANA)
Plumbing Manufacturers Institute (PMI)
International Code Council (ICC)
Green Building Initiative (GBI)
Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA)
National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC)
International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)
National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS)
Alliance to Save Energy (ASE)
Green Mechanical Council
U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)
Indoor Air Quality Association (IAQA)
North American Insulation Manufacturers Association (NAIMA)
Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors National Association (SMACNA)
Federation of American Scientists (FAS)
PPG Industries
BuildingInsight, LLC
Green Builder Media
National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB)

cc: Chairman Peter Visclosky, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Ranking Member Rodney Freglinghuysen, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Chairman Byron Dorgan, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Ranking Member Robert Bennett, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development