

July 1, 2009

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
502 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

We the undersigned organizations would like to express our strong support for the Energy Efficiency in Housing Act of 2009 (S. 1379). We appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this important bill and we believe it is the next major step in the federal government's commitment to ensuring that affordable housing is more energy efficient, healthy and environmentally sustainable.

The principles and practices of "green" development offer proven, cost effective ways to address current and longstanding housing challenges, rising energy and transportation costs and the effects of global warming, all of which disproportionately affect low-income people. There is experience and research showing that affordable housing can deliver significant health, economic and environmental benefits from green building and rehabilitation practices on a cost effective basis with the right resources and approach. This holds true for all kinds of housing developments, in smaller as well as larger communities, throughout the country.

The building sector is the single largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the United States, and Americans' demand and consumption of electricity grows by the day. The modifications to federal housing and lending policy proposed in S. 1379 will provide financial tools for homeowners and the building sector to curb energy use. In addition to its contribution to reducing global warming pollution, the bill encourages monetary savings on electricity bills for low- and middle-income Americans, as well as the federal government. These savings are crucial for low-income families, as they can spend nearly 20 percent of their annual income on utilities—four times more than even a median-income household.

This bill incentivizes wise environmental and economic investments by both the government and consumers. "Greening" affordable housing – making it more energy efficient, healthier and more environmentally sustainable – will help to ensure that the enormous promise of the emerging green economy includes opportunities for everyone in our society.

We hope the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs will move to expedite consideration of the Energy Efficiency in Housing Act and we look forward to working with you to help make that happen.

Please call upon us if we can provide additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Healthy Homes
American Architectural Foundation
American Public Health Association
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc.
American Institute of Architects
American Planning Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Architecture 2030
Carpet and Rug Institute
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Center for Neighborhood Technologies
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.
Environment America
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Global Green USA
The Green Standard
International Code Council
Jonathan Rose Companies
Lennar Ventures
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
McCormack Baron Salazar
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National Association of State Energy Officials
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Community Land Trust Network
National Housing Trust
National Institute of Building Sciences
National NeighborWorks Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Smart Growth America
Solar Energy Industries Association
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
Sustainable Spaces
U.S. Green Building Council
Yellow Springs Home Inc.