December 14, 2020

The Honorable Ben Cardin

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Committee on Environment and Public Works

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Cardin:

The undersigned businesses and organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of employees, are writing in support of your bill, **the GSA Resilient, Energy Efficient, and Net-Zero Building Jobs Act of 2020” or the “GREEN Building Jobs Act of 2020”.** In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic’s impacts to our national economy, public health, and way of life, this bill will stimulate the economy through construction and clean energy jobs, while saving taxpayer money and creating a healthier, more resilient, and lower carbon Federal buildings portfolio.

The construction industry continues to show deteriorating demand, and its unemployment rate in November was 7.3 percent, compared to 4.4 percent in November 2019, according to a survey by the Associated General Contractors of America. And nearly half a million clean energy workers remain unemployed (446,144)—representing a 13% decline from early 2020 for this historically fast-growing workforce, according to E4TheFuture based on an analysis by a new analysis by BW Research Partnership. These are local jobs and the losses are being felt throughout the nation.

The bill’s investment in Federal buildings provides an opportunity to create quality jobs and contribute to local economies around the country. For example, the types of GSA facilities serving the public include courthouses, USDA offices, urban office towers, ports of entry, DOE centers, and many others, and are found in 2,200 communities. Investing in the efficiency, health, resilience of these Federal facilities, which play a critical role as public facilities and as employers in communities around the nation, provides both direct and spillover benefits.

The **GREEN Building Jobs Act of 2020** would authorize funding directly to the GSA, to build and upgrade facilities, exhibiting leadership in high performing, resilient, healthy, and low-carbon buildings and campuses for the Federal workforce and public customers. Retrofit projects focused on energy efficiency would prioritize leveraging of private sector financing through performance contracting and other private-public partnership models. In these leveraged projects, private finance will support efficiency paid for through guaranteed energy savings while Federal funds will allow projects to target zero energy and zero carbon outcomes, install zero-emission vehicle infrastructure; and increase resiliency with distributed energy resources and building-grid integration. The Act also includes clear direction and funding to address the backlog of Federal facility cost-effective energy conservation projects[[1]](#footnote-1) that have been identified through audits.

Along with funding, the Act will establish performance goals for energy intensity, water intensity, and greenhouse gas emission reductions, and zero emission vehicle charging and fueling infrastructure. These goals will drive activity in GSA’s building projects with focused outcomes, and move the portfolio towards low-carbon operations.

The Act will also direct GSA to develop and apply resilience and health metrics, and enable healthy building upgrades that center on occupant health outcomes. This aligns with research by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in collaboration with GSA projecting that improving occupant productivity from an enhanced indoor environment could result in gains of nearly $1 billion for federal facilities.[[2]](#footnote-2) Additionally, the Act will establish flood risk protections considering current climate science, and authorize funding for resilience including to implement green infrastructure to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

Investing in Federal buildings and campuses is a priority stimulus policy for job creation, and will create long term dividends for the Federal agencies in saving money on utilities, enabling greater continuation of operations during emergencies, and supporting health and productivity of the Federal workforce.

Thank you for your leadership in supporting Federal facilities with this important bill.

Sincerely,

ABM Industries

Alliance to Save Energy (ASE)

Ameresco

American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE)

American Institute of Architects (AIA)

American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC)

ASHRAE

Copper Development Association

Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI)

Federal Performance Contracting Coalition (FPCC)

Hannon Armstrong

Institute for Market Transformation (IMT)

International Well Building Institute (IWBI)

Johnson Controls

National Association of Energy Services Companies (NAESCO)

National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO)

NORESCO

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

Schneider Electric

U.S. Green Building Council

1. The DOE Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) [EISA 432 Compliance Tracking System](https://ctsedwweb.ee.doe.gov/CTSDataAnalysis/ComplianceOverview.aspx) shows a significant backlog in implementing the cost-effective energy conservation measures identified in audits. Of those measures, more than half (representing 20 million MBtu) have not yet been initiated. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PNNL, Efficient Buildings, Healthy Buildings (March 2020), https://www.pnnl.gov/sites/default/files/media/file/EED\_0803\_FLIER\_HealthyBuildings\_v3.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)