



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

Press Release

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Obama Administration Expands Better Buildings Challenge to Multifamily Housing, Launches New Programs to Boost U.S. Energy Efficiency *As Part of Better Buildings Initiative, Administration Commits to Expanding Energy Efficiency Investments in Federal Buildings*

WASHINGTON – Building on \$2 billion in financing commitments from the private sector for energy efficiency updates to commercial buildings under the President’s Better Buildings Challenge, the U.S. Departments of Energy and Housing and Urban Development today expanded the Challenge to multifamily housing such as apartments and condominiums and launched the Better Buildings Accelerators to support state- and local government-led efforts to cut energy waste and eliminate market and technical barriers to greater building efficiency. The Obama Administration also announced it will challenge Federal agencies to further expand their use of performance-based contracts through 2016 to upgrade the energy efficiency of Federal buildings at no cost to taxpayers – helping the Federal Government save money and further reduce energy use.

“Over the last two years, President Obama’s Better Buildings Challenge has helped drive greater energy efficiency further and faster, save families money and give U.S. businesses an edge in the global market,” said Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz. “By partnering with the multifamily housing industry as well as state and local governments, utilities and manufacturers, we can continue this progress – cutting carbon pollution, fostering economic growth and building a cleaner, more sustainable energy future.”

“The more than 50 multifamily owners from across the nation have committed to the Better Buildings Challenge. These housing leaders understand that it represents an opportunity for them to reduce their long-term energy costs, support innovative technologies, create good jobs, and help shape healthier communities and neighborhoods,” said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. “The expansion of the Better Buildings Challenge to include multifamily housing represents an important step toward achieving the goals laid out in the President’s Climate Action Plan.”

“Upgrading the energy efficiency of America’s buildings is one of the easiest ways to save money, reduce pollution and create jobs,” said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. “Federal agencies have met the President’s challenge to save energy and money in Federal buildings by committing to energy efficiency upgrades at no up-front cost to taxpayers. Expanding this challenge will ensure that the Federal Government continues to do its part to save energy, grow our economy, and promote healthy communities.”

In February 2011, President Obama launched the Better Buildings Challenge to help American commercial and industrial buildings become at least 20 percent more energy efficient by 2020. More than 120 diverse organizations, representing over 2 billion square feet, are already on track to meet the 2020 goal and cut energy use by an average 2.5 percent annually – equivalent to about \$58 million in energy savings each year. In December 2011, President Obama also challenged Federal agencies – in support of the Better Buildings Challenge – to enter into \$2 billion worth of performance-based contracts within two years, at no cost to taxpayers. Federal agencies have since committed to a pipeline of about \$2.3 billion in projects. Today’s announcements build on these achievements and support the Administration’s broader efforts to double U.S. energy productivity by 2030.

President Obama pledged to expand the Better Buildings Challenge as part of his June 2013 Climate Action Plan, which laid out a series of steps to reduce carbon pollution, prepare the U.S. for the impacts of climate change and lead international efforts to address this global challenge. Industrial and commercial buildings account for about 50 percent of all energy use in the United States. Upgrading the energy efficiency of our homes and other buildings will save energy, save families and businesses money on utility bills and reduce pollution in our communities.

Expanding Better Buildings Challenge to Multifamily Housing

Through the Better Buildings Challenge, the Departments of Energy and Housing and Urban Development are partnering with both market rate and affordable housing owners as well as public housing agencies to cut energy waste and help families save on their utility bills. Through the Challenge expansion announced today, 50 multifamily partners – representing roughly 200,000 units and over 190 million square feet – have committed to cutting their energy use by 20 percent in ten years.

In the United States, about a quarter of households live in multifamily housing such as apartments and condominiums. Improving the energy efficiency of these buildings by 20 percent will save nearly \$7 billion in energy costs each year and cut greenhouse gas emissions by 430 million tons of carbon dioxide.

As part of the Better Buildings Challenge, the new multifamily housing partners will showcase innovative strategies to boost energy efficiency, including lighting improvements, heating and cooling system upgrades, installing rooftop solar systems and supporting new financing for energy retrofits and green construction. These partners will also share best practices and lessons learned with other Challenge participants – serving as a model for the broader U.S. multifamily housing industry.

Find a list of the multifamily housing organizations joining the Better Buildings Challenge [HERE](#).

Launching the Better Buildings Accelerators

The Energy Department also launched three new Better Buildings Accelerators to support and encourage ongoing state- and local government- led efforts to cut save money and energy. The Accelerators bring state and local governments, utilities and manufacturers together to develop

cost-effective, creative solutions and break down the market and technical barriers facing greater investment in U.S. building energy efficiency.

The three [Better Buildings Accelerators](#) announced today include:

- **Better Buildings Energy Data Accelerator:** More than 30 cities and utilities – including Xcel, Atlanta Gas and Light, NSTAR/Northeast Utilities, San Diego Gas & Electric and the cities of Atlanta, Minneapolis, Denver, Boston, Cambridge, San Diego and Chula Vista – will develop streamlined approaches to help building owners access whole-building energy use data. Secure, reliable and user-friendly energy data will help building owners accurately benchmark energy consumption and identify the best ways to achieve greater energy and cost savings.
- **Better Buildings Performance Contracting Accelerator:** Sixteen states, cities and school districts – including Colorado, Hawaii, Minnesota and Washington State – will enter into \$1.2 billion worth of performance-based contracts, helping to drive economic development, utilize private sector innovation and increase efficiency at minimum cost. Performance-based contracts avoid upfront costs to the customer while guaranteeing long-term cost and energy savings from installed equipment, efficiency controls and other solutions.
- **Better Buildings Industrial Superior Energy Performance (SEP) Accelerator** – Nine U.S. manufacturers and utilities – including 3M Company, Schneider Electric, Nissan, Cummins, Bonneville Power Administration and Northeast Utilities – will use a superior energy performance (SEP) certification program to verify energy efficiency improvements and practices. The SEP certification program follows a transparent, globally-accepted system for building energy performance. As part of this Accelerator, partner utilities will offer technical resources and training to help manufacturers pursue SEP certification at their facilities.

Challenging Federal Agencies in Energy Efficiency

In December 2011, as part of the Better Buildings Challenge, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum entitled “Implementation of Energy Savings Projects and Performance-based Contracting for Energy Savings,” challenging Federal agencies to enter into \$2 billion worth of performance-based energy efficiency contracts for Federal buildings within two years. To date, Federal agencies have developed a pipeline of about \$2.3 billion in projects, an increase of more than 200 percent per year compared to before the Challenge.

To continue this successful strategy for saving energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and saving taxpayer dollars, the Administration is expanding the Challenge beyond the original \$2 billion goal. Agencies will work with the Energy Department’s Federal Energy Management Program in early 2014 to identify a pipeline of additional project commitments to further reduce energy use through 2016.

Find more information on President Obama’s Better Buildings Challenge at www.energy.gov/betterbuildings.

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