

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON  COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

*One Region Moving Forward*

July 23, 2013

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The Hon. Ron Wyden  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural  
Resources  
U.S. Senate  
  
The Hon. Al Franken  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Energy  
U.S. Senate

The Hon. Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural  
Resources  
U.S. Senate  
  
The Hon. Jim Risch  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy  
U.S. Senate

**RE: S. 1191, the Better Buildings Act of 2013, and  
S. 1209, the State Energy Race to the Top Initiative Act of 2013**

Dear Senators,

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments is an independent nonprofit association that brings together leaders from 22 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress to address major regional issues in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. Among our top initiatives is aiding the implementation of large-scale, sustained investments in energy efficiency.

As the Energy and Natural Resources Committee considers several important pieces of legislation to improve energy efficiency, we support measures that leverage voluntary measures and state leadership to reduce energy waste, support local economies, and conserve natural resources.

Thus, on behalf of the Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, I would like to express our support for S. 1191, the Better Buildings Act of 2013, and S. 1209, the State Energy Race to the Top Initiative Act of 2013. We urge the Senate to enact these bills on their own or as part of a comprehensive energy efficiency package.

The Better Buildings Act would create Tenant Star, a voluntary, market-based program that promotes energy efficiency in the commercial sector by focusing on the actions of both tenants and property owners. Our region's economy is driven heavily by the

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commercial sector, and is home to many tenant-occupied commercial buildings. Having seen the great success of the ENERGY STAR system to educate building owners on energy management and to bring about improvements in building efficiency, we expect Tenant Star will have a strong positive impact on energy use in the leased spaces in our region.

The State Energy Race to the Top Initiative was developed by the Alliance Commission on National Energy Efficiency Policy, a bipartisan effort led by Sen. Mark Warner, that developed recommendations on how to modernize U.S. energy use to improve productivity. The initiative will help identify and expand innovative state-level energy efficiency programs through competitive grants, collect and share performance data, and promote best practices among states.

Across our region, governments, non-profit organizations and private investors have been working together to develop new ways of financing energy improvements in existing buildings. This bill has the potential to significantly scale up existing efforts such as Commercial PACE and credit enhancements, and to allow for experimentation with new programs such as on-bill financing and revolving loan arrangements.

We commend the sponsors for taking leadership on this issue and offer our support in helping to advance these bill toward enactment by the 113th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Berliner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roger Berliner, Chair  
Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

CC: The Hon. Michael Bennet  
U.S. Senate

The Hon. Mark Warner  
U.S. Senate

The Hon. Kelly Ayotte  
U.S. Senate

The Hon. Joe Manchin  
U.S. Senate