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IDAHO CHAPTER**

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Interim Committee on Energy, Environment and Technology
Legislative Services Office
P.O. Box 83702
Boise, Idaho 83720-0054

November 18th, 2011

Members of the Committee:

The US Green Building Council (USGBC) Idaho Chapter has been working diligently to advance the efficiency, quality and overall performance of Idaho's built environment and we believe that energy efficiency in residential, commercial, and public buildings is critical in a prosperous future for Idaho.

We applaud the Interim Energy, Environment and Technology committee on your willingness and effort to update the 2007 Idaho Energy Plan to make it relevant for today's energy market and to ensure that the legislature advances policies that will help our state meet our energy needs efficiently, prudently, and economically while creating jobs.

The 2007 Plan recommended the legislature adopt new building codes on a three year cycle and item E-10 relating to updating building codes was removed in the draft 2012 plan. These codes are an important tool to help our state achieve more energy efficiency in our residential, commercial, industrial, and public building stock.

The USGBC Idaho Chapter strongly urges the committee to stipulate in the energy plan update that energy codes be reviewed for updates by the State Building Board on a three-year cycle. Adoption of the energy code is subject to the negotiated rule making process which is a process open to public comment. Updating and implementing energy efficiency building codes represents the lowest cost conservation measure for the state to capture the lowest cost energy resource – energy efficiency.

Investing in energy efficiency measures in Idaho's built environment also stimulates local economic development. When a homeowner insulates their house they hire local workers. Moreover, the homeowner reduces their energy bill, freeing up money to spend on other ways.

The 2007 Energy plan recommended updating the income tax code to encourage residential home upgrades. With the 2012 plan the legislature should continue to put a high priority on encouraging conservation and energy efficiency, utilizing all available tools, including incentives, regulations, leading by example, providing education, and in this case, updating the income tax code to bring it current with our existing building stock.

We strongly encourage the legislature to consider creating residential incentives for building beyond building code standards such as to LEED or Energy Star standards which would stimulate local job creation and help bring more energy efficiency to the market. The state could even encourage efficient building practices through reduced building permit fees or by streamlining the review processes. If the committee and the legislature required state agencies to exceed building code standards when renovating or building state buildings it would be advancing policies that would reduce the long term operating costs of public facilities and ultimately save taxpayer money.

Thank you for extending the comment period on the 2012 Energy Plan draft and the opportunity to provide the committee feedback on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Charlie Woodruff
USGBC Idaho Chapter Director