

MISSION

Green Building United fosters transformative impact in our communities through green building education and advocacy.

VISION

A sustainable, healthy, and resilient built environment for all.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Green Building United's diverse professional membership advocates for policy and legislation to advance a sustainable and healthy built environment. Our community is made up of architects, engineers, policy makers and advocates, landscape architects, developers, contractors, building managers, building operators, government workers, and more.

Green Building United is committed to working with the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Wolf Administration to achieve the two-fold goal to:

- (1) improve the health and quality of life of individuals and
- (2) reduce climate change-causing carbon emissions by improving upon how buildings and communities are designed, built, and operated.

The legislative priorities below that Green Building United supports and opposes are not the only solutions to achieving the vision of a sustainable, healthy, and resilient built environment for all. Different strategies than those outlined above can achieve the same end goals and the proposed legislative solutions are not yet comprehensive enough to ensure this outcome.

We welcome opportunities to engage further on how green building and sites are a vehicle to reduce energy use and save money, improve indoor environments and positively impact health and productivity, and mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and protect Pennsylvanians and their assets.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Green Building United's members are engaged with Act 129 energy efficiency programs as ratepayers and end users and as professionals that help carry out projects that qualify for incentives and rebates.

Act 129 is an important and cost-effective tool to reduce electricity demand in the Commonwealth, encouraging new and existing buildings to improve upon their efficiency to reduce cost, energy use, and climate-change causing carbon emissions from the building sector.

In addition to engaging with Phase IV of Act 129, we support legislation that seeks to improve upon the program's successes and oppose legislation that does not address the program's challenges in a manner that maintains the positive aspects of the program.

SUPPORT SB 232 | UTILITY ENERGY EFFICIENCY INVESTMENT

Removes the cost cap on utility investment in Act 129 energy efficiency programs and expands eligible programs.

OPPOSE SB 129 | LARGE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL OPT-OUT OF ACT 129 (ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION)

Allows large commercial and industrial energy users to voluntarily exit the utility-administered Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EE&C) Plans under Act 129.

EMBODIED CARBON

The most sustainable building is the one that is already built. While we focus mostly on the emissions that stem from operating a building, building materials and construction also contribute to greenhouse gas emissions as embodied carbon. One of the best strategies available to reduce embodied carbon between 50 and 75 percent is to renovate and reuse existing projects.

Green Building United supports an extension and improvement of Pennsylvania's Historic Preservation Incentive Tax Credit Program to encourage the reuse of existing, historic structures to both reduced embodied carbon and protect and revitalize the Commonwealth's historical assets.

A report from the Commonwealth's Independent Fiscal Office supports the positive economic impact of the credit and the need for additional funding to support its aim. Investment in historical preservation results in direct increased tax revenue from properties that might otherwise go undeveloped and in indirect quality of life community benefits to redevelopment.

SUPPORT SB 541 | IMPROVING PENNSYLVANIA'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVE TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Extends the program sunset date to 2030 from 2020 and increase the program's annual cap to \$30 million. Caps individual projects at \$2.5 million.

CLEAN ENERGY SUPPLY

The building sector is one of the Commonwealth's largest single sources of greenhouse gas emissions due to building energy use. No matter how energy efficient we can make a building through design, construction, and operations, if the electricity grid that feeds that buildings is not supplying clean energy, we will not make significant progress in reducing emissions.

Though Green Building United's member expertise is predominantly in designing, constructing, and operating buildings that consume energy, our success in fulfilling the organization's mission is intertwined with the progress made toward ensuring a clean energy supply.

SUPPORT SB 600 | MODERNIZING PENNSYLVANIA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY STANDARDS

Modernizes the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS) for the first time since 2004. Includes expanding AEPS Tier I requirement from 8 percent to 30 percent by 2030, including 7.5 percent for in-state grid-scale solar and 2.5 percent for in-state distributed generation solar.

SUPPORT HB 531 | COMMUNITY SOLAR LEGISLATION

Would enable community solar projects in PA.

ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

- Leadership and support of the recent adoption of the 2015 International Building Codes, improving energy efficiency by 30 percent for all new commercial buildings and renovations. Following passage of legislation to modernize the code adoption process in Pennsylvania, GBU assisted the City of Philadelphia with passage and implementation of an exemption granted by the legislature to exceed the Uniform Construction Code and adopt the even more energy efficient 2018 International Codes for non-residential buildings.
- Support of Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing (C-PACE) legislation, a financing tool for energy efficiency and clean energy projects for new and existing buildings. GBU continues to engage its membership around adopting C-PACE programs in counties throughout the Commonwealth.
- Support of PA Executive Order 2019-01, which requires state-owned and -leased facilities to meet beyond code requirements and track and measure energy use over time.
- Support of the inclusion of Passive House in the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency's (PHFA) Qualified Application Plan (QAP.) The QAP informs the highly-competitive process by which PHFA selects the multifamily affordable housing projects that receive federal low-income housing tax credits. The inclusion of Passive House has incentivized project developers to pursue the ultra-efficient energy standard, resulting in improved thermal comfort and indoor air quality, as well as low energy use and utility bills for residents.