



**Comments of Susy Jones, High Performance Buildings Program Manager
For Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
To the Committee on Environmental Resources and Energy
Regarding the Hearing on:
Pennsylvania House Bill No. 193:
“The High Performance State Buildings Standards Act”
December 6, 2011**

On behalf of Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)¹, thank you Chairman Hutchinson and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 193, “An Act Requiring the design, construction and renovation of State-owned or State-leased buildings to comply with specified energy and environmental building standards.”

NEEP’s High Performance Buildings Project promotes operational energy savings in retrofit and new buildings in the region. NEEP’s vision is that the work done today on High Performance Buildings will pave the way for the development of Net Zero Energy Buildings, buildings that consume no more energy than they produce, on a broader scale throughout the region. NEEP led the development of the [Northeast Collaborative for High Performance Schools](#) (NE-CHPS), a set of building and design standards for schools, based on California’s pioneering [CHPS](#) protocol. Today, more than 50 high performance schools have been constructed in the Northeast.

This legislation is a promising step toward requiring state-funded buildings in Pennsylvania to be built sustainably, in a way that is both economically and environmentally beneficial to Pennsylvania taxpayers. The construction of high performance buildings and the renovation of existing buildings will play a critical role in reducing energy consumption and harmful greenhouse gas emissions, saving taxpayer dollars, creating jobs, and increasing occupant health and productivity.

Develop a standard that fits Pennsylvania’s priorities and maximizes energy efficiency

Developing a consensus-based high performance building standard, as proposed by this legislation, is an innovative approach to establishing a set of minimum criteria that truly fit the priorities of Pennsylvania and maximize potential energy and cost savings. States that lead the nation in energy efficiency have opted to take a similar approach when enacting their green building legislation. For instance, Massachusetts and Connecticut developed “Massachusetts LEED Plus” and the “Connecticut Building Standard Guidelines Compliance Manual for High Performance Buildings” respectively². These state-adapted guidelines set a higher bar for energy efficiency than do the protocol of neighboring

¹ [NEEP](#) is a regional non-profit organization founded in 1996 whose mission is to promote the efficient use of energy in homes, buildings, and industry throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic through regionally coordinated programs and policies that increase the use of energy efficient products, services and practices, and help achieve a cleaner environment and a more reliable and affordable energy system. The comments are presented by NEEP staff and don’t necessarily reflect the views of NEEP’s Board, sponsors or partners.

² [Executive Order 484](#) required state buildings to follow Massachusetts LEED Plus, established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Sustainable Design Roundtable. The [CT Building Standard Guidelines Compliance Manual for High Performance Buildings](#) was developed to assist in complying with [Public Act No. 07-242](#).

states that adopted the USGBC's LEED standard at the Silver or Certified level without additional requirements.

Continuous tracking, measuring and evaluation will help ensure energy savings

NEEP stresses the importance of the "Monitoring and evaluation" section of the proposed legislation. Even when buildings are designed to LEED or a comparable high performance building standard, they often miss the mark of their energy target when they begin to operate. A gap between predicted and measured energy performance can significantly affect cost savings in projects. Building energy use must be tracked and systems must be continuously optimized to ensure savings. Practices such as advanced commissioning and measurement and verification are crucial.

Pennsylvania is on the road to a sustainable future

NEEP encourages Pennsylvania to take a strong lead in developing a standard that maximizes energy efficiency in both the design and operation of state-funded public buildings and helps build a more sustainable future. Technologies and practices exist today that can dramatically reduce energy use in Pennsylvania buildings by 30 percent and beyond.³

Once again, we thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony and look forward to working with you and providing any assistance we can to advance sustainability in Pennsylvania's state buildings.

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³ For instance, the [New Buildings Institute](#) developed prescriptive measures that result in buildings that are 30% more energy efficient than model building standards.