

February 10, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
361-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
110 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders:

We, the undersigned organizations, write in strong support of investments in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for school modernization. In particular, we support the House-passed appropriation of \$14 billion in funds for school modernization, renovation, and repair, with specific provisions related to green, high-performing schools.

The design, construction, and renovation of green, high-performing schools not only improve the learning environment for students; they create jobs. A study conducted by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University reports that each \$1 million in construction spending supports 28.5 full-time jobs. This means that the \$14 billion provided in the House bill for school modernization would create nearly 400,000 private-sector jobs in the design and construction industries, which have been particularly hard-hit by the economic crisis. There are thousands of shovel-ready school projects across the country that will generate jobs immediately.

America's school buildings are in desperate need of repair. Too many of America's children attend school in overcrowded buildings with leaky roofs, faulty electrical systems, and outdated technology, all of which compromise their ability to achieve, succeed, and develop the educational skills necessary for the workforce of the 21st century. A study released in December 2008 by the American Federation of Teachers estimates school-infrastructure need at more than \$254 billion nationally. As the economic crisis worsens, local education agencies are further delaying and canceling major capital projects to repair and modernize school buildings, meaning that the amount of money needed to repair schools grows each day.

According to the State Education Data Center (SEDC) of the Council of Chief State School Officers, average spending by school districts on operations and maintenance is \$900 per student, or \$45 billion per year nationwide. This means school districts pay \$45 billion just to maintain school buildings' *current* condition. Construction adds an additional \$45 billion per year. With the increased costs of energy, construction materials, and tight budgets, school districts are currently laying off maintenance personnel, canceling or deferring modernization work, and delaying purchases of new equipment.

Green, high-performing schools promote healthy, high-achieving students who will become future advocates for green living, as this generation learns the importance of building for a sustainable future. School districts see direct benefits accrue at a level of four times the upfront cost of green improvements due to energy savings and other cost -mechanisms.

In fact, according to a 2006 study by Capital E, the energy and water savings from green schools would save each school, on average, \$100,000 annually, which is enough money to hire a full-time teacher at a time when state and local funding for education is in scarce supply. Improved energy and water efficiency from the installation of green features also promise long-term savings that can replenish the funds of school districts and put money back into taxpayers' pockets.

Intrinsically, schools are an investment in our collective future, ensuring that tomorrow's leaders are prepared to meet the significant challenges our nation will face. As we work to steer our economy out of decline and toward a vibrant future, it is critical that we grasp this opportunity to ensure high-quality learning environments for our children.

For these reasons, we call on Congress to include \$14 billion for green, high-performing schools in the final version of H.R. 1.

Sincerely,

American Institute of Architects

U.S. Green Building Council

21st Century School Fund

450 Architects

Addison

Advocates for Children of New York

AEC Science & Technology

AllForTek, Inc.

Alliance for Quality Education

American Architectural Foundation

American Association of Classified School Employees

American Congress on Surveying and Mapping

American Council of Engineering Companies

American Federation of Teachers

American Lighting Association

American School & University

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

American Society of Landscape Architects

Architecture 2030

ASBO International

Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association

Associated General Contractors of America

Association of Union Constructors

Baybutt Construction Corp.

Bowie-Gridley Architects

BRW Architects

Builders Hardware Manufacturers Association

Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Campaign for Fiscal Equity

Campaign for Quality Construction
Collaborative for High Performance Schools
College Planning & Management
Composite Lumber Manufacturers Association
Council for Educational Facility Planners International
Dykeman Architecture
E&I Cooperative Service, Inc.
Earth Day Network
Environment America
Federation of American Scientists
Finishing Contractors Association
Friends of the Earth
Green Building Initiative
Green for All
Healthy Schools Campaign
Innovation Partnership
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
International Council of Employers of Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers
International Union of Operating Engineers
Johnson Controls, Inc.
Lord & Son Construction, Inc.
Masonry Veneer Manufacturers Association
Mechanical Contractors Association of America
National Association for State Community Services Programs
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Energy Service Companies
National Association of State Energy Officials
National Education Association
National Electrical Contractors Association
National Institute of Building Sciences
National PTA
National Roofing Contractors Association
National School Plant Management Association
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Wildlife Federation
New Visions for Public Schools
Paragon Furniture
PDT Architects (Maine)
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors-National Association
Plumbing Manufacturers Institute
Polyisocyanurate Insulation Manufacturers Association
Roof Coatings Manufacturers Association
Schneider Electric
School Planning & Management
Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association
Sheet Metal Workers International Association
Sierra Club
The Stella Group, Ltd.
Sustainable Buildings Industry Council
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Window and Door Manufacturers Association

