EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

CHAIRMAN

March 27, 2007

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe,

Thank you for inviting me to testify on the Public Buildings Cost Reduction Act of 2007. I am sorry that I am not able to join you in person to express our support for the Committee's bipartisan effort. I also want to express my appreciation to this Committee for working with CEQ and exchanging ideas as you developed this bipartisan legislation.

This bill focuses on advancing efficient lighting technologies within General Services Administration (GSA) buildings. It encompasses and promotes a concept that is important to all – increased efficiency. This increased efficiency will save taxpayer dollars, conserve energy, reduce greenhouse gases, and provide for cleaner air. The installation of more energy efficient lighting technologies will quickly pay dividends to taxpayers, and Americans will realize both financial and environmental benefits.

This bill builds upon action taken by the President earlier this year. On January 24, 2007, President Bush signed an historic new Executive Order. Executive Order 13423, Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management, integrates a number of sustainable practices into one strategic vision for the Federal government.

One pillar of the new Executive Order is energy efficiency. The US government is the largest consumer of energy in the world, and energy security is a goal that all Americans share. The Executive Order has several goals addressing energy, including: energy efficiency improvement of 3% per year or 30% by 2015 relative to 2003 levels; increase in renewable energy with at least 50% coming from new sources; and conformance with a series of guiding principles for high performance buildings that include lighting, building materials, indoor air quality, and heating and cooling. In addition, we have a goal for purchasing more efficient and environmentally sound electronics, realizing how much they contribute to our overall energy footprint. Specifically, the Executive Order requires that at least 95% of the computers it purchases

are EPEAT registered. EPEAT, or the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool, is an international labeling standard that rates electronics on series of environmental and energy efficiency attributes.

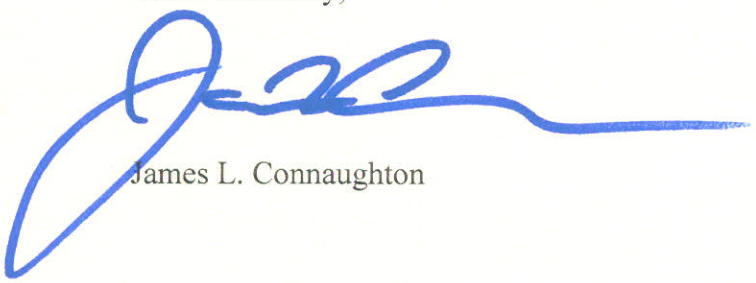
Retrofitting indoor lighting for efficiency is one area of potentially immediate benefit due to the short payback period. Retrofits typically involve replacing older bulbs with new, more efficient bulbs, such as compact fluorescent bulbs. Lighting retrofits are also attractive because they are relatively less intrusive than other energy efficiency improvements that may require more invasive renovation. Realizing this significant potential benefit to the Federal government, and all Americans, GSA has already embarked on an aggressive retrofit program for all of their buildings.

The legislation that this hearing will discuss presents an excellent opportunity to accelerate the GSA lighting retrofit program. The bill also provides for an acceleration of the overall energy efficiency goal in the EO as they apply to GSA facilities, a goal which is already 50% more aggressive than EPAct 2005. This bill provides for an additional impetus and opportunity to meet the goals. It will also provide for more assurance of continuity through changes in Administrations. By accelerating the pace, Americans will realize improved efficiency and cost savings sooner. We strongly support these measures.

In addition, I am pleased that this bill recognizes the benefits of local governments taking steps to improve their efficiency. As the Committee of jurisdiction over the United States Environmental Protection Agency, you should be aware of Administrator Johnson's commitment to the Energy Star program and his aggressive efforts to increase the usage of Energy Star lighting technology.

Thank you again for providing me the opportunity to provide you with this letter. Please know that we remain willing to provide assistance as you seek to move this bill through the legislative process.

Yours Sincerely,



James L. Connaughton