

The Honorable Scott Pruitt  
Administrator  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20460

March, 2017

Dear Administrator Pruitt,

As the new administration sets its priorities for the Environmental Protection Agency, the undersigned architecture firms urge you to preserve and protect vital programs at the Agency that support our core business functions and save American consumers billions of dollars per year in utility and health care costs.

The EPA's Energy Star program, created by engaging industry leaders and manufacturers, has long been recognized for leadership in reducing energy use in buildings. Several Energy Star tools are vital for architects conducting energy efficient design work. Energy Star's Portfolio Manager software enables architects and their clients to track and benchmark the energy and water usage of their entire building asset portfolio. Similarly, the Target Finder tool helps designers evaluate the energy performance of a commercial building design or existing building. These resources help institutional clients such as hospitals and universities confidently target capital investment in efficient new buildings and retrofits which will bring down their operational expenses.

Seeing the effectiveness of this data driven approach, cities across the country have begun requiring the use of these types of energy benchmarking tools for building owners to optimize building energy efficiency, reduce costs, and alleviate strain on electrical grids. According to the Institute for Market Transformation, 24 major US cities and 11 US states have adopted energy use benchmarking ordinances that rely upon Energy Star Portfolio Manager to function. These cities - including Washington, DC, Orlando, Atlanta, Kansas City, Austin, and Salt Lake City - use these ordinances to spur immediate and low-cost reductions in energy consumption, and provide the opportunity for increased government efficiency, job creation, and economic and environmental health.

Energy Star's voluntary third party product certifications are important to consumers, and also serve to assure designers that the equipment they specify will meet important performance goals. In fact, in many jurisdictions, energy codes and standards have been adopted that would be difficult or impossible to meet without the use of EPA benchmarking tools and data. Energy Star building ratings also provide trusted outside validation of performance claims for prospective buyers and tenants.

Building technology is advancing rapidly and new materials are constantly coming to market. The EPA's Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Chemical Substance Inventory is a vital tool that designers use to research certain building materials as part of their larger review of those materials. Indoor air quality is another critical component of health considerations. The EPA's Indoor Air Quality program has provided invaluable data regarding issues such as radon mitigation, mold prevention, and chemical emissions from building products. EPA has also developed the testing methods used to verify air quality in order to qualify for voluntary building certification programs such as LEED, Green Globes, and ASHRAE 189.1. These benchmarks are required by many cities, states, and construction lenders.

Architectural services are a key export for the United States, and American architects are hard at work using their skills to design buildings all over the world. Our expertise in clean, healthy, and energy efficient buildings is a major driver of this demand. Energy Star, indoor air quality, and materials safety information programs are just a few examples of the EPA resources that directly support our design work each and every day. Eliminating tools and data, cutting staff, or reducing funding for any of these programs will severely impact our ability to meet client demands, fulfill our contractual obligations, and carry out the duties of our licensure to protect the public. We look forward to working with you to preserve these vital programs and to further the Agency's mission to promote a cleaner and healthier environment.

Sincerely,

[Design Firms Listed Here]

CC: Members of Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works, Senate Appropriations Committee, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and House Appropriations Committee.