

The Honorable Rick Perry
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

May X, 2017

Dear Secretary Perry,

As the new administration sets its priorities for the Department of Energy (DOE), the undersigned architecture firms urge you to preserve and protect vital programs at the Department that support our core business functions and ensure the public's safety, health, and wellbeing. The architecture industry provides nearly 200,000 jobs in the United States. Architectural services are a key export for the United States as well, and American architects are hard at work using their skills to design buildings all over the world. Our expertise in energy efficient buildings is a major driver of this demand, and DOE's research and programs are vitally important to the ability of architects to continue this work.

The Building Technologies Office (BTO), within the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), supports work of critical importance to architects and the entire building industry. From energy modeling software to building code development analysis, the BTO's research, initiatives, and tools support the design and construction of the world's buildings.

Research and Data. The energy efficiency advances being supported by the BTO have major implications for our long-term energy security and economic growth. Increased energy efficiency in the built environment is the fastest way to accelerate our energy independence and boosts the domestic economy by reducing operating costs for commercial building owners, residential consumers, and government assets. BTO research supports these outcomes by advancing technology and knowledge for the building industry.

Working closely with the National Laboratories, the BTO leads research into energy-saving HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), building envelope, window, and control technologies, bringing these technology advances to market. These products are then specified in order to help architects and their clients design appropriate and impactful high performance buildings.

Building Codes and Energy Modeling. Communities rely on building codes as the first line of defense in ensuring that minimum acceptable standards are met in the built environment. Specific energy codes serve similarly to set baselines for building energy performance. The codes and standards development process is significantly enhanced by the expertise of DOE, which provides neutral analysis of the impact of code change proposals on construction cost and energy performance. These voluntary, consensus-based codes are developed by stakeholders in the industry and adopted by various communities across the country according to local conditions and needs. Architects participate in the code development process and apply these requirements in their day-to-day design work. This work is made possible, in part, by energy modeling data and software tools like OpenStudio that the BTO develops. Without these tools and software, the demand for increased energy performance could not be met.

Commercial Building Baselines. The Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey, or CBECS, serves a critically important function to the building design and construction industry. First conducted in 1979, this periodic study of building energy usage is administered by the Energy Information Administration (EIA) and serves as an important baseline for energy efficient design. The corresponding Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS) is similarly administered and is equally as important. DOE provides tools to help analyze and interpret CBECS and RECS data in order to increase its utility for designers and other users. This data is vital to the practice of architecture, and also underpins important industry energy reduction goals like the American Institute of Architects' 2030 Commitment for reducing building energy usage and the federal government's fossil fuel reduction targets required by Section 433 of the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act.

The Building Technologies Office's numerous programs, including the Better Buildings and Build America Initiatives, the Department's support of codes and standards development, and the availability of Commercial Building Energy Consumption data, are just a few examples of the DOE resources that directly support innovative design work in our communities. Eliminating tools and data, cutting staff, or reducing funding for any of these programs will severely impact our ability to meet client demands, stay competitive in an increasingly global marketplace, and fulfill our building performance goals. We look forward to working with you to preserve these vital programs and to further the Department of Energy's important mission to advance energy technology and promote a cleaner, healthier environment.

Sincerely,

(Firm Names Listed Here)