

H.R. 3490, THE 21ST CENTURY GREEN HIGH-PERFORMING PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES ACT

Improving Education, Strengthening the Economy, Fighting Global Warming

School buildings should be safe and healthy learning environments for children. According to recent estimates, America's schools are tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars short of the funding needed to bring them up to good condition. Meanwhile, research shows a correlation between school facility quality and student achievement. Modernizing school buildings would also create jobs in the construction industry, one of the industries hit hardest by the recent economic downturn. By modernizing school buildings to make them more energy efficient and more reliant on renewable sources of energy, modernized school buildings can also help reduce the emissions that contribute to global warming.

The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public Schools Facilities Act:

PROVIDES SCHOOLS WITH ACCESS TO FUNDING FOR MODERNIZATION, RENOVATION, AND REPAIR

- Authorizes \$6.4 billion for school construction projects for fiscal year 2012 and ensures that school districts will quickly receive funds for school modernization, renovation, and repair projects that improve the teaching and learning climate, health and safety, and energy efficiency.
- Allocates the same percentage of funds to states and school districts that they receive under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, except that it guarantees each such district a minimum of \$5,000.

ENCOURAGES ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND THE USE OF RENEWABLE RESOURCES IN SCHOOLS

- Requires that funds be used for projects that meet one of three widely recognized green building standards: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; Energy Star; or Collaborative for High Performance Schools – or equivalent state or local standards.
- Allows states to reserve one percent of funds to administer the program and to develop a plan to create a statewide database of schools' facilities, modernization and repair needs, energy uses, carbon footprints, and energy efficiency quality plans.
- Requires school districts to publicly report the educational, energy, and environmental benefits of projects; how they comply with the green building requirements; and the percentage of funds used for projects at low-income and rural schools.
- This legislation will help schools become more energy efficient by allocating half of their funds in the first year of authorization towards energy-saving and environmentally friendly construction projects. The portion of funds that must be compliant with standards increases by 10 percent each year through 2017.
- Requires the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to create a database of the best practices in school construction and to provide technical assistance to states and school districts regarding best practices.

RESERVES AID FOR SCHOOLS RECOVERING FROM NATURAL DISASTERS

- Authorizes separate funds – half a billion dollars over five years – for public schools that are damaged by natural disasters.

ENSURES FAIR WAGES AND BENEFITS FOR WORKERS BY APPLYING DAVIS-BACON PROTECTIONS TO ALL GRANTS FOR SCHOOL MODERNIZATION, RENOVATION, AND REPAIR PROJECTS.

This bill was previously introduced in the 111th Congress as H.R. 2187.

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