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Environment Virginia Supports SB109 (Senator Petersen)

As we face one of the most difficult economic environments since the Great Depression, it is the responsibility of the state to get the most out of every tax dollar spent. Improving energy efficiency in state buildings is one of the quickest and easiest ways for the state government to protect the taxpayers investment.

SB109 will codify an executive order which requires that all executive branch facilities that are of new construction (from drafting process onward) or undergo significant renovation meet either LEED Silver or Green Globes “Two Globes” certification.

What are the benefits of meeting these certifications?

- In Virginia, 48% of our energy is used to power our buildings and more than 95% of that energy comes from expensive, polluting sources such as coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear power. By reducing energy use in our buildings we can lessen the harmful effects of these energy sources.
- This process ensures minimized environmental impact through proper site selection and development.
- Healthier indoor air quality for the buildings users.
- Reduced production of pollutants and solid waste in the construction and maintenance of the building.

What are the benefits for the taxpayers?

- Studies have shown that meeting these requirements will only require a 1 – 3% increase in construction costs. However, on average buildings built to these certifications save 30% on their ongoing energy and maintenance costs.¹ Taking into account that our buildings last upwards of 40 years, a small upfront investment will save taxpayers millions of dollars over the lifetime of the facilities.
- A savings of 30% in ongoing costs would translate into a 76% reduction in the total cost of state facilities. Few other pieces of legislation produce such cost savings for the taxpayer, and none without a reduction in the quality and quantity of service or the requirement of a budget amendment.

Why does this need legislative action?

- For the past four years, the requirements of this legislation have been followed, but the General Assembly should not allow these savings to be put at risk by whichever governor happens to be in office.
- This bill is an opportunity for the state to serve as an example for businesses and homeowners by showing that fiscal responsibility and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive.

¹ Green Building Costs and Benefits, <http://www.cap-e.com/wededitpro/items/O59F3481.pdf>