

Biden Kicks Off Five Days of Earth Day Activities with New Energy Efficiency Effort

April 21, 2010



Vice President Biden will today kick off five days of administration events around the 40th anniversary of Earth Day with the announcement of the selection of 25 communities for up to \$452 million in Recovery Act funding to "ramp-up" energy efficiency building retrofits. Under the Department of Energy's Retrofit Ramp-Up initiative, communities, governments, private sector companies, and non-profit organizations will work together on pioneering and innovative programs for concentrated and broad-based retrofits of neighborhoods and towns—and eventually entire states. These partnerships will support large-scale retrofits and make energy efficiency accessible to hundreds of thousands of homeowners and businesses. The models created through this program are expected to save households and businesses about a \$100 million annually in utility bills, while leveraging private sector resources, to create what funding recipients estimate at about 30,000 jobs across the country during the next three years.

"For forty years, Earth Day has focused on transforming the way we use energy and reducing our dependence on fossil fuel—but this year, because of the historic clean energy investments in the Recovery Act, we're poised to make greater strides than ever in building a nationwide clean energy economy," said Vice President Biden. "This investment in some of the most innovative energy-efficiency projects across the country will not only help homeowners and businesses make cost-cutting retrofit improvements, but also create jobs right here in America."

"This initiative will help overcome the barriers to making energy efficiency easy and accessible to all—inconvenience, lack of information, and lack of financing," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "Block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, we will make our communities more energy efficient and help families save money. At the same time, we'll create thousands of jobs and strengthen our economy."

In addition to the \$452 million Recovery Act investment, the 25 projects announced today will leverage an estimated \$2.8 billion from other sources over the next 3 years to retrofit hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses across the country. Overall, the program funding was eight times oversubscribed, with more than \$3.5 billion in applications received for the just over \$450 million in Recovery Act funds available, indicating significant demand for investment in energy-saving and job-creating projects like these nationwide.

Grantees will employ innovative financing models to make these savings accessible, for example by offering low and no-interest loans that are repaid through property tax and utility bills. In implementing these projects, grantees will deliver verified energy savings and incorporate sustainable business models, to ensure that buildings will continue to be retrofitted after Recovery Act funds are spent. The Department will use the lessons learned from these pilot programs to develop best-practice guides to comprehensive retrofit programs that can be adopted and implemented by other communities across the country.

The Retrofit Ramp-Up projects, which are part of the overall \$80 billion Recovery Act investment in clean energy and energy efficiency, complement the Obama Administration's "Recovery through Retrofit" initiative, which lays the groundwork for a self-sustaining and robust home energy efficiency industry. The awards are the competitive portion of DOE's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program, which was funded for the first time under the Recovery Act to help state, local, and tribal communities make strategic investments in improving energy efficiency, reduce energy use and fossil fuel emissions.

Secretary Chu, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, and Carol Browner, Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change, joined Vice President Biden today for the announcement, which was the first of more than two dozen events and activities Administration officials will participate in around Earth Day. In addition to today's event, the President will host an Earth Day reception with environmental leaders on Thursday, April 22nd, a video message from the

President will air as part of events on the National Mall on Sunday, April 25th, and administration officials will participate in educational programs with school children, visit wetland and coastal restoration projects and participate in community service projects as part of the president's Earth Day call to action. The events will highlight some of the ways the administration is working to improve the environment, transform American infrastructure for greater energy-efficiency and build a clean energy economy that supports the jobs of the future. As part of the events, administration officials will also continue the push for Congress to act on HOME STAR legislation and comprehensive energy and climate change legislation. A full roster of Administration Earth Day activities is below and more information on the president's Earth Day call to action is available on the "[A New Foundation for Energy and the Environment](#)" [Web page](#) on the White House Web site.

Retrofit Ramp-Up Awards

The following governments and non-profit organizations have been selected for Retrofit Ramp-Up awards. These projects are planned to begin in fall 2010. Final award amounts are subject to negotiation:

- Austin, Texas: \$10 million
- Boulder County, Colorado: \$25 million
- Camden, New Jersey: \$5 million
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning: \$25 million
- Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance, Ohio: \$17 million
- Greensboro, North Carolina: \$5 million
- Indianapolis, Indiana: \$10 million
- Kansas City, Missouri: \$20 million
- Los Angeles County, California: \$30 million
- Lowell, Massachusetts: \$5 million
- State of Maine: \$30 million
- State of Maryland: \$20 million
- State of Michigan: \$30 million
- State of Missouri: \$5 million
- Omaha, Nebraska: \$10 million
- State of New Hampshire: \$10 million
- New York State Research and Development Authority: \$40 million
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: \$25 million
- Phoenix, Arizona: \$25 million
- Portland, Oregon: \$20 million
- San Antonio, Texas: \$10 million
- Seattle, Washington: \$20 million
- Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance: \$20 million
- Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, Ohio: \$15 million
- Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation : \$20 million

Read more on the selected projects ([PDF 129 KB](#)), or see a map of the selected projects ([PDF 176 KB](#)). [Download Adobe Reader](#).

Retrofit By the Numbers

- Residential and commercial buildings consume 40% of the energy and represent 40% of the carbon emissions in the United States. Building efficiency represents one of the easiest, most immediate and most cost effective ways to reduce carbon emissions and save money on energy bills while creating new jobs.
- Existing techniques and technologies in energy efficiency retrofitting can reduce energy use by up to 40% per home and lower total associated greenhouse gas emissions by up to 160 million metric tons annually.
- Residential and commercial retrofits also have the potential to cut energy bills by \$40 billion annually.