



October 15, 2009

The Honorable Steve Israel  
US House of Representatives  
2457 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
ATTN: Tricia Russell

Dear Congressman Israel:

On behalf of the American Institute of Architects and our 83,000 members, I write to you in strong support of your draft legislation to provide credit support to enhance the availability of private financing for clean energy and energy efficient technology deployment in our nation's buildings. Given the numerous, well-documented benefits that energy efficient buildings offer and recognizing that the ongoing credit crisis has significantly slowed new construction and major renovations of buildings, Congressional efforts to spur energy efficiency in the built environment through credit support is a prudent and effective policy.

Specifically, your legislation authorizes the Department of Energy to support Property-Assessed Clean Energy(PACE) bonds. PACE bonds are municipal bonds where the proceeds are lent to commercial and residential property owners to finance energy retrofits (efficiency measures and small renewable energy systems) and who then repay their loans over 20 years via an annual assessment on their property tax bill. Your legislation will both encourage energy efficiency in our nation's buildings as well as begin to free up the ever tightening credit market.

The ongoing financial crisis has significantly impacted the architecture profession. Architecture firms have been reporting decreased billings for nearly a year and half and based on the AIA's Architectural Billings Index (an economic indicator of future construction activity) it appear that the economic climate will remain challenging for some time. Many firms are being forced to slash salaries and benefits, lay off employees, and some are even closing their businesses because of a lack of work. This dismal condition for architects and their firms has been caused primarily due to a lack of credit and financing for construction projects. As banks have restricted lending, building owners and developers have cancelled projects, taking work out of the hands of our nation's architects, and significantly harming the design and construction industry (which is responsible for about one out of every 10 dollars of US GDP).

Page 2  
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Your legislation would provide states and localities with the credit support necessary to pursue bond sales. This would immediately stimulate the design and construction sector and result in more energy efficient buildings, laying the groundwork for future prosperity and more sustainable communities.

We commend you for your leadership on this issue, and we offer our strong support for your legislation. We look forward to working with you to see it signed into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AG', written in a cursive style.

Andrew L. Goldberg  
Senior Director, Federal Relations