



Date: August 8, 2006
To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
From: Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor *BL*
Patrick O'Donnell, Councilmember, Fourth District *(POD)*
Subject: Green Building Requirements

As the City of Long Beach works to provide affordable housing to low through moderate income residents, we have a responsibility to ensure that such housing remain truly affordable through energy efficiency and sustainability features. Energy prices have skyrocketed in recent years, and the low-income households in our community have been disproportionately affected as energy bills take up a much larger percentage of their incomes.

Investing in energy efficient and renewable technologies is a cost-effective means to provide long-term savings to households and environmental benefits to the entire community. Studies have shown that green buildings pay for their green components quickly through reduced operating costs and improved performance. Opportunities exist for cost savings up-front for developers and builders through private, state and federal rebates and incentives.

Through the design, construction, and operations of its own facilities, the City of Long Beach has strived to provide leadership in green building practices. In June 2003, the City Council unanimously adopted the City's Green Building Policy requiring the City to achieve LEED Certification, with a policy goal of LEED Silver, for all new City projects and additions of over 7,500 square feet. Current projects designed to meet or exceed LEED Certification standards include the MacArthur Park Library, California Recreation Teen Center, and Watershed Classroom at the Aquarium of the Pacific.

The adopted Green Building Policy addresses the need to upgrade the minimum certification standard to LEED Silver. In an effort to build upon the city's commitment to environmental stewardship and affordable housing, stronger green building policies and provisions should be adopted for construction projects in the City that utilize City funds, including Redevelopment and Housing Development Company projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

I respectfully request that this matter be referred to the City Manager for a report back to the Council within 90 days to determine the feasibility and workability of a green building ordinance requiring a minimum of LEED Silver Certification, or other level of LEED Certification, for projects utilizing City funds.