

BETTER BUILDINGS ACT OF 2013

The Better Buildings Acts of 2013 (S. 1191) was introduced by Senators Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.) on June 20, 2013. The bipartisan House counterpart, H.R. 2126, was proposed on May 23, 2013, by Representatives David McKinley (R-W.Va.) and Peter Welch (D-Vt.).

Summary

S.1191/H.R. 2126 would advance a voluntary, market-driven approach to aligning commercial building owners and their tenants to reduce energy consumption. This bipartisan legislation would save both energy and money, benefitting individual tenants, property owners and the community as a whole.

S.1191/H.R. 2126

- Promotes energy efficiency
- Amends the Energy Independence and Security Act, requiring a study by the DOE on efficiency strategies in separate spaces
- Reduces energy consumption
- Establishes Tenant Star program

Provisions

The Better Buildings Act would amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to require the Department of Energy (DOE) to perform a study on feasible approaches to improve the energy efficiency of tenant occupied spaces (called “separate spaces”) in commercial buildings. The study would include consideration of:

- Efficiency measures in initial design and construction of separate spaces;
- Processes that may be undertaken by owners, tenants, architects and engineers;
- Strategies to ensure proper energy intensities (lighting, cooking, laundry, etc.) for meeting tenant needs;
- Analyses of energy and financial savings from efficiency measures, including consideration of tax and other incentives;
- Application of modeling and simulation methods, measurement and verification approaches, and integrated design and construction best practices; and
- Impacts on employment.

Additionally, the proposal would direct the EPA, in consultation with DOE, to establish a Tenant Star program within ENERGY STAR to promote energy efficiency in separate spaces through a voluntary certification and recognition program. Further, the bill would direct the Energy Information Administration (EIA) to expand collection and dissemination of certain data through the Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey, including information in support of Tenant Star.

Both bipartisan measures are fundamentally the same, with a few minor differences. The House version directs the General Services Administration (GSA), in consultation with DOE, to develop model leasing provisions for commercial buildings, while the Senate version does not. The Senate version also incorporates the original ENERGY STAR authorization from the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to divide the Tenant Star program responsibilities between the DOE and the EPA.

The full text of S. 1191 is available at <http://beta.congress.gov/113/bills/s1191/BILLS-113s1191is.pdf>, while the full text of H.R. 2126 can be accessed at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr2126ih/pdf/BILLS-113hr2126ih.pdf>.