

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 21, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER *RM*

SUBJECT: US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY BETTER BUILDINGS CHALLENGE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

ISSUE: City Council authorization of the City’s participation in the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Better Buildings Challenge program.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager to apply for participation in the US DOE Better Buildings Challenge program; and
- 2.
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: In February 2011, the US Department of Energy (DOE) launched the Better Buildings Challenge to accelerate investment in energy efficiency and make commercial and industrial buildings 20% more energy efficient by 2020. The Better Buildings Challenge is a voluntary initiative to highlight leading organizations committed to building energy efficiency upgrades across their facility portfolio.

The DOE initially recruited large corporations and municipalities to participate in the Better Buildings Challenge. Recently, the DOE began recruiting mid-size corporations and municipalities to participate. Subsequently, in March 2012, the DOE contacted the City of Alexandria regarding participation in the Better Buildings Challenge based on the City’s success in implementing of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Energy Efficiency and Conversation Block Grant (EECBG) program¹ and broader actions being taken as part of the City Council’s Strategic Plan, Eco-City Alexandria, the Environmental Action Plan (EAP), and the Energy and Climate Action Plan (eCAP).

¹ The City’s ARRA EECBG implementation team includes the Departments of Community and Human Services, Finance, General Services, Transportation and Environmental Services, and Office of Housing.

DISCUSSION: City staff have reviewed the DOE’s Better Buildings Challenge program mission and requirements and believe the City would benefit from voluntary participation.

Voluntary participation in the DOE’s Better Buildings Challenge requires the following:

- Public pledge of portfolio-wide energy savings goal of at least 20% by 2020 and develop and organization-wide plan, schedule, and milestones;
- Announce an initial showcase project and initiate the project within 9 months;
- Share energy consumption data to measure progress against pledged goals, and share information about the energy efficiency implementation models (including tools, technologies, and processes) used to reach pledged goal.

The City’s ability to meet the DOE’s Better Buildings Challenge requirements is discussed below.

Public Pledge

The City’s Environmental Action Plan (EAP 2030) and Energy and Climate Action Plan (eCAP) both provide organization-wide goals and plans for achieving a 20% reduction in City-owned and –operated facilities by 2020. The adoption of the EAP 2030 and eCAP serve as public pledges of portfolio-wide energy savings goals and meet DOE requirements.

Showcase Project

The City’s current installation of a solar photovoltaic system at the Beatley Central Library (funded through ARRA-EECBG grants funds) would serve as a candidate showcase project.

Energy Consumption Data Sharing

The DOE requires sharing and tracking of energy data using the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) EnergySTAR Portfolio Manager software platform. City staff is currently using Portfolio Manager for benchmarking and energy-performance analysis of City facilities. The City’s use of Portfolio Manager meets DOE requirements.

BENEFITS: The benefits of the City’s participation in the DOE’s Better Buildings Challenge are several. First, the DOE, through the Better Buildings Challenge, provides the City a national recognition opportunity for its leadership in energy efficiency exemplified by the City Council’s Strategic Plan, Environmental Action Plan (EAP), Energy and Climate Action Plan (eCAP), and signing of the Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Second, the DOE will recognize participants who leverage, develop, and share innovative energy efficiency implementation models and showcase projects. The City could be eligible for recognition with implementation of showcase energy efficiency projects. Finally, the DOE offers technical assistance and resources to participating organizations to implement energy efficiency opportunities in their facilities and organization.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding for a showcase facility energy efficiency project would be provided by City’s ARRA-EECBG award to install a solar photovoltaic system at the Beatley Central Library. The Energy Management CIP project, as currently planned in the FY 2013 – FY 2022 Approved CIP, would be utilized to implement energy efficiency projects to make progress towards achieving DOE’s 20% energy savings by 2020 goal.

ATTACHMENT: DOE Better Buildings Challenge Overview

STAFF:

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Bill Eger, Energy Manager, General Services

Jeremy McPike, Director, General Services

Bill Skrabak, Deputy Director, Office of Environmental Quality

Better Buildings Challenge

Overview

The Better Buildings Challenge is a national leadership initiative calling on corporate chief executive officers, university presidents, and state and local leaders to make a significant commitment to building energy efficiency.

Stimulating Economic Growth

The energy to operate the buildings in which we work, shop, and go to school costs the U.S. approximately \$200 billion annually and, on average, 30 percent of this energy is wasted. The goal of the Better Buildings Challenge is to make American buildings 20 percent more energy efficiency by 2020 to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, protect the environment, and save billions of dollars in energy costs that can be spent growing businesses, investing in new technologies, and creating American jobs.

The Better Buildings Challenge involves Partners and Allies:

- ▶ **Partners** are companies, universities, and municipalities that make a public commitment to implement plans to achieve lasting, organization-wide energy savings.
- ▶ **Allies** are service providers, financial institutions, utilities, and technology companies that make a public commitment to support the energy efficiency marketplace.

Demonstrating Leadership and Innovation

Better Buildings Challenge Partners are national leaders in building energy efficiency. By joining the program, they agree to:

- ▶ **Commit** to conduct an energy efficiency assessment of their building portfolio and pledge an organization-wide energy savings goal for the next two to five years.
- ▶ **Take action** by showcasing an energy efficiency project and implementing a plan to achieve lasting energy savings.
- ▶ **Report** results by sharing cost effective approaches for saving energy and performance data that demonstrates the success.

Supporting Partners and Allies

The U.S. Department of Energy, in conjunction with its federal partners, supports program participants by:

- ▶ Providing expert technical assistance and energy efficiency implementation models.
- ▶ Connecting Partners with a network of Allies (including financial, technology, and service organizations) that can help them achieve their energy savings pledges.
- ▶ Publicly recognizing Partners and Allies for achieving energy and cost savings and applying innovative energy efficiency solutions.

Realizing the Benefits of Energy Efficiency

Companies, universities, and state and local municipalities can quickly realize the benefits of improving the performance of their buildings including saving money and increasing their competitiveness. In addition, demonstrating a commitment to social responsibility can significantly strengthen an organization's brand and stakeholder loyalty.

The Better Buildings Challenge will nationally recognize Partners and Allies for achieving energy savings and demonstrating innovative and cost-effective energy efficiency solutions.

