



Overview

Energy efficiency upgrades and design elements in buildings have the potential to drastically lower U.S. energy demand while providing benefits such as cost savings, carbon pollution reduction, and decreased water use. Buildings currently account for nearly 75% of U.S. electricity demand, and incorporating sustainable design into the built environment can help cities become self-sufficient while increasing affordability of buildings, resilience and promoting job creation.

Nationwide, lawmakers are implementing green infrastructure policies that enable communities to become more resource efficient. One of the most ubiquitous standards is the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification that recognizes best-in-class buildings demonstrating efficiency from construction to operating to disposal. Several states require adherence to or promote LEED standards as they set new protocols for future developments in the public and private sectors.

Legislation

- Massachusetts introduced [H.2810](#) (2019), an act that invests 30% of all revenue (\$400-\$600 million per year) in local clean transportation, resiliency, and renewable energy projects.
- Connecticut's [S.B.927](#) (2019) establishes an environmental infrastructure fund within the Connecticut Green Bank, which collects funds for green infrastructure investments and technologies.
- In Washington, [S.B.5293](#) (2019) requires a state energy performance standard for commercial buildings and establishes an early adoption incentive program for the state standard(s).

KEY POINTS

- In 2020, buildings in the U.S. accounted for 40% of total U.S. energy consumption. ([U.S. Energy Information Administration](#))
- LEED-certified buildings are cost effective, saving \$1.2 billion in energy costs, \$149.5 million in water costs, \$715.3 million in maintenance costs, and \$54.2 million in waste costs. ([U.S. Green Building Council](#))
- Green buildings cost only marginally more to build, and result in significantly higher sales and rental rates, as well as tremendous savings on energy costs over time. ([U.S. Green Building Council](#))

Other Resources

- Green Infrastructure: How to Manage Water in a Sustainable Way -- Natural Resources Defense Council <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/green-infrastructure-how-manage-water-sustainable-way#future>
- State and Local Green Building Initiatives - The American Institute of Architects http://resources.cleanenergyroadmap.com/SCPP_Z_green-building-incentives.pdf
- Roadmap to Resilient, Net-Zero Buildings in the Pacific Northwest -- The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region http://www.pnwer.org/uploads/2/3/2/9/23295822/netzero_background.pdf
- LEED explanation and certification requirements -- United States Green Building Council <http://www.usgbc.org/leed>

