



## Go Green, Virginia

Date: February 3, 2009

Subject: **Economic Stimulus package**

The problem with a GOP wish list or strike list is the conspicuous intent to slash green project funds. Converting federal vehicles to Hybrid technology will not only save on gas costs but will specifically launch a hybrid industry focus in America. What better way to "protect" our automakers than that? Surely an open-ended bailout check to the automotive industry is not as much of an economic scalpel as a specified stimulus that reduces government expenditures. Does the GOP really want to reduce spending or are they just blowing hot air? Green building projects are also marked for striking on the GOP Senate punch list, another example indicative of GOP frivolity that is honestly wasting taxpayers' time and money -- not to mention their trust. The construction industry is taking a sound beating and a heavy emphasis on green specialization in construction methods will at least dish out a good number of contracts for projects that can ultimately extend to states and localities that jump on the green efficiency standards for public structures of varying sizes [the litmus test is usually at 10,000 square feet or above for new construction].

To recap, while cutting out sections of a massive spending bill is initially aligned with fiscally conservative ideology, it is only so at the surface. Refusing to adjust to efficient practices will cause a short-term avoidance of expenditures but will ensure that the operations of government will become less cost-effective as energy prices fluctuate toward the heavens. If this is what the aim of fiscal conservatism is all about, then please count me out. Increasing efficiency will ultimately decrease the burden on future generations. That private and public structures [places of business, government, etc.] are slashing consistent costs is a testament to the effective nature of green building and practice standards.

Locally, Richmond embraced LEED Silver standards for new construction over 10,000 feet and all major renovations with respect to the public domain. Construction costs are only rated at an additional 1-3% of normal costs of projects that do not include green standards. The savings for the City will be realized on the short-term and savings will continue to expand beyond that horizon. That local legislators such as Councilman Bruce Tyler bases their negative opinions of green building policies on outdated cost statistics suggests not only an inherent problem in an ideology but also a gap in green benefit

awareness that should be alleviated from all angles. Our practices concerning energy, whether at home or at a place of business, must be revised; at that same time, as green policies are put into place in order to compensate for traditional usage habits, the net cost will decrease even more drastically as people adjust their lifestyles as stewards of their own economies and environments.

It is a matter of simple economics. While miscellaneous appropriations in the stimulus package can be trimmed or cut, green provisions must remain. Our government should take notice.

