

Energy Information for Commercial Buildings

Senator Al Franken (MN)

Background

Benchmarking is a practice that allows building owners to assess the energy use of their buildings and compare the performance to similar buildings. The practice helps owners identify buildings that can most benefit from energy upgrades. The federal Energy Star Buildings program has encouraged benchmarking for many years, and EPA estimates that this program has benchmarked more than 185 million square feet of U.S. commercial floor space, resulting in average energy savings of about 5% in these buildings.

❖ This Bill Benchmarks Federally Leased Buildings

Existing federal law requires federally *owned* buildings to evaluate their energy consumption. Senator Franken's legislation builds on existing law by requiring federally *leased* buildings to benchmark and disclose their energy usage data, where practical.

❖ The Bill Requires Benchmarking Study for Commercial and Multi-Family Buildings

A number of U.S. cities encourage or require benchmarking for large commercial or multi-family buildings. This information helps building owners, purchasers, and renters make more informed decisions. Senator Franken's legislation requires DOE to conduct a study on benchmarking methodologies so that cities and states can avoid pitfalls and implement best practices. This provision only applies to commercial and large multi-family residential buildings. Single-family homes and small buildings that house several families are not included.

❖ The Bill Authorizes Competitive Grant Program for Data Aggregation Needed for Benchmarking

The legislation establishes a \$2.5 million competitive grant program for interested utilities, their partners, and utility regulators to make building energy use data available to building owners. This includes aggregated tenant consumption so that entire buildings can be benchmarked. In order to protect privacy, data on individual tenants would not be provided.

Endorsements

The legislation is endorsed by the Alliance to Save Energy, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, the Institute for Market Transformation, and the US Green Building Council. It has also been reviewed by key organizations in the real estate and utility industries.

If you have any questions about this bill, or to cosponsor the legislation, please contact Ali Nouri at Ali_Nouri@Franken.Senate.Gov ; 224-2846