



# Congressman Jared Polis

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## H.R. 5989 -The Green Credit Enhancement Program Act

### Background

- Research shows that poor-quality school environments adversely affect the health and performance of both students and teachers. For example:
  - ✓ Poor acoustics from antiquated ventilation and heating/cooling systems can severely inhibit student learning.
  - ✓ Indoor pollutants and substandard air quality contributes to lower concentration levels in students, can negatively affect the health of teachers and students, and can contribute to student illnesses, such as asthma.
  - ✓ Insufficient lighting has also demonstrated to be detrimental to student learning.
- Inadequate learning facilities have shown to result in low student morale, discourage teacher retention and reduce the ability for schools to aid special needs children.
- Between 2005 and 2007, schools' energy costs increased from \$6 billion annually to \$8 billion.
- Green schools:
  - ✓ use 30%-50% less energy and 30% less water than a conventional school
  - ✓ reduce harmful carbon dioxide emissions by 40%, which helps reduce global climate change
  - ✓ have better lighting and temperature controls, which promotes higher student achievement; and
  - ✓ have a more comfortable indoor environment, improved ventilation and indoor air quality, which result in short-term (\$96,760 per year) and long-term savings as a result of green building.
- The green building market is estimated at \$60 billion, with school facilities comprising the fastest-growing segment.
- Green schools will benefit both the larger environment and the indoor environment, improving the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn as well as the health of students, teachers, and other school staff.
- Building, upgrading or modernizing school buildings to make them more energy efficient and more reliant on renewable sources of energy can help prepare workers for the clean energy jobs of the future and also reduce the emissions that contribute to global warming.

### What the Green Credit Enhancement Program Act does:

This legislation updates and upgrades a current federal program that provides charter schools support through nonprofit community development financial institutions to access credit markets and address their facilities needs. The bill "greens" the current program by adding "green" building requirements, increasing funding and making technical changes. Specifically, the Green Credit Enhancement Program Act:

- Provides funding for innovative credit enhancement initiatives to support the acquiring, constructing, and renovating charter school facilities through green building standards.
- Requires applicants to use at least 50% of the funding to fund projects consistent with any one of the following green building certification programs:

- ✓ The United States Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green building rating standard (LEED Green Building Rating System).
  - ✓ The Energy Star program of the United States Department of Energy and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.
  - ✓ The CHPS green building rating program developed by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools.
  - ✓ The Green Building Initiative environmental design and rating system referred to as Green Globes, or
  - ✓ Any other program adopted by a State or entity within a State having authority over a local educational agency that provides for green building certification.
- Gives priority to applications that propose to use at least 65% to fund modernization, renovation, repair, or construction projects consistent with green building certification programs.
  - Protects schools in areas with high-cost green construction by exempting them from the 50% minimum requirement when compliance causes the cost of a project to increase by more than 10% or the Secretary approves a non-green application.
  - Ensure transparency and accountability by mandating annual reports to the Secretary of Education, including financial statements of and records, as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness of leveraging private funds, among other items.

### **Supporting Organizations**

- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
- U.S. Green Building Council