



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEWS RELEASE

City of Seattle
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

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Green Building Initiative: saving energy for homes and businesses

Mayor's proposal builds on President Obama's call to action

SEATTLE – Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels today announced a multitiered strategy to save energy and shrink the amount of climate pollution from Seattle's buildings and homes. Launched today on Earth Day, the Green Building Capital Initiative:

- Offers 5,000 residential home energy audits, using state-of-the-art diagnostics to analyze a home's heating and cooling systems. Funded through a partnership with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and Seattle City Light, the audits will be available at \$95, a steep discount from the \$600 cost. Residents may call 206-684-3000 to schedule an audit.
- Develops a loan program so residents will be able to make energy-saving home improvements. The public-private partnerships would be funded, in part, by \$1.2 million of federal stimulus money from the Federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.
- Requires measurement and disclosure of energy usage, beginning in 2010, for commercial buildings larger than 50,000 square feet and multifamily buildings with more than 20 units. The program will be expanded to smaller buildings over two years. The data can be used by property owners to determine energy-saving measures.
- Increases energy efficiency requirements for new buildings by 30 percent, and launches a new expedited permit process for innovative projects that meet energy performance standards.
- Ramps up and expands existing training programs for auditors and other energy-efficiency technicians. The strategy is expected to generate about 230 jobs.

“By making our homes and businesses use energy wisely, we save on our utility bills, and we help the planet,” said Nickels. “We’ve been working on green buildings for years, but now we have a partner in the White House. We’re ready to join with President Obama to create jobs, clean the air, and lead the world.”

Energy use in residences and buildings accounts for 20 percent of Seattle's carbon footprint. By 2020, the Green Building Capital Initiative will increase the efficiency of existing buildings by 20 percent, and raise the energy performance of new buildings.

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Through its Five Year Conservation Plan, Seattle City Light will provide \$1.5 million for the initiative. In addition, the city of Seattle will use part of its recent \$6.1 million allocation from the new Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program. The city may also seek further federal stimulus funds.

Pledging in his 2008 State of the City speech that Seattle would improve energy efficiency by 20 percent, Nickels convened a Green Building Task Force to come up with specific proposals for single-family homes, multifamily residences, and commercial buildings. The strategy announced today can be shared with cities across the region that receive federal stimulus money for energy efficiency programs.

“PSE is committed to working with its customers in Seattle and around the region to help them save energy, save money and protect the environment. This partnership with PSE’s HomePrint energy evaluation program and the city of Seattle will be good for the economy and for homeowners,” said Cal Shirley, vice president of Energy Efficiency Services for PSE.

“We have made great progress on Green Buildings -- bringing together economic opportunity and environmental stewardship. But we can do more, and right now it is essential that we work harder to win the rewards of conservation investments,” said City Council President Richard Conlin. “This next stage of the Green Building initiative will help working families and those affected by the economic downturn by reducing their costs for energy. We can shape a future that truly works for Seattle as we enter the era of the new, green economy -- together as a community.”

Seattle’s actions coincide today with an energy-efficiency initiative announced by Mayor Michael Bloomberg in New York City.

Van Jones, special advisor for green jobs, enterprise and innovation for the White House, said: “Smart, green solutions are the way of the future for all Americans – whether they wake to see New York City’s skyline or Seattle’s Space Needle. Our nation’s mayors are showing leadership from coast to coast regardless of their backgrounds or the very different cities they represent. We know they hold one thing in common: a passionate commitment to cutting wasted energy, reducing carbon pollution and increasing jobs for their citizens. We are proud to support these efforts as they help lead American cities to a better future. President Obama shares this dedication to a green recovery.”

Speakers at today’s press event include: Cal Shirley, vice president of PSE’s Energy Efficiency Services; Seattle City Councilmember Richard Conlin; Sara Patton, executive director Northwest Energy Coalition; Ayoka Fasuyi, residential audit trainee

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