THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

STATEMENT OF
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"BUILDING DATA COLLECTION: *A REEXAMINATION OF PRIORITIES*"

National Institute of Building Sciences
Representative Hearing on Data Needs to Achieve High-Performance Buildings

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July 18, 2011
The American Institute of Architects

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On behalf of the members of the American Institute of Architects, I wish to thank NIBS for hosting this hearing. We join with the other members of the design and construction industry that rely upon sound, clear, and directed information with which we can establish directions for designing, building, and maintaining high-performance buildings, as well as sustainable, livable communities.

The AIA represents the nation's professional community of architects that are dedicated to, and licensed by, states to protect public health, safety, and both physical and environmental welfare.

In December 2005, the AIA adopted a position statement that set the profession on a trajectory toward carbon neutrality. This position statement continues to serve as the guiding principle for our sustainability efforts. This focuses our efforts to educate the industry and the public about the impact of buildings on the environment and in providing our architect members with the knowledge and the resources to transform the way we design and construct buildings.

Additionally, the AIA has established public policies on codes and standards, in which we declare both our intent to forward the goals of the AIA toward safe, sustainable buildings and communities, while also promoting the professional practice of architecture. Pertinent to the discussion here today, the AIA's "one code" policy states:

The AIA supports regulation by a single set of comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary codes and standards, which establish sound threshold values of health, safety, and the protection of the public welfare throughout the United States. To that end, the AIA espouses the development and adoption of model building codes that:

- *Include participation by architects and the public in a consensus process;*
- *Are the product of informed education and research;*
- *Are without favoritism or bias to any special interest;*
- *Include provisions for a prompt appeals procedure for all that might be aggrieved;*
- *Are cost-effective in relation to public benefit; and*
- *Promote building code provisions that set performance rather than prescriptive criteria.*

In particular, it is the item noting support for "the development and adoption of model building codes that are the product of informed education and research" that we raise today.

Significant improvements have been made over the past decade to limit how buildings, their construction, and their operation impact the environment. The highest levels of government have made policy decisions regarding the use of materials, the development of our natural resources, and the rising demand for energy. Many if not all of these decisions have been made based on the information provided to all of us in the industry

by independent and reliable sources, like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the Energy Information Administration, as well as independent nonprofit organizations and private-public partnerships. Without confidence in the resources developed by these entities, we all risk losing a focused direction and making progress.

The AIA's 2030 Commitment is the AIA's cornerstone effort to demonstrate the progress AIA member architects are making toward reducing the operational energy use of their designs, while encouraging other architects to do the same. The program is a voluntary call for action for member firms to join and demonstrate progress toward the industry's widely adopted 2030 targets in both how the firms operate and how they design. To date, more than 165 firms have made the commitment, ranging in size from sole practitioners to large, multi-national practices.

In May of this year, the AIA released its first annual report on the AIA 2030 Commitment, entitled *Measuring Progress Toward 2030*. Of the firms who have signed on to the Commitment, the first-year data from the first 56 firms represents over 365 million square feet of project work currently in design. To put that number into perspective, the total square footage of all LEED-certified buildings, as of April 2011, equaled just over 1.1 billion square feet. Over the last 11 years, Energy Star buildings represent 2.2 billion square feet, and the 2003 Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS) represents 720 million square feet of built space. In just one year, from just 56 firms out of the 18,000-plus architecture firms represented by AIA

members, the 2030 Commitment has collected predicted Energy Use Intensity (pEUI) data on real estate equaling one-third of all LEED-certified buildings to date, and more than half of all the square footage represented by the 2003 CBECS.

The power of this reporting tool is clear, and the method for collecting this data is simple, scalable, and builds upon data collection already required or that will be required as part of the forthcoming adoption of advanced, high-performance building codes. The connection of pEUI, or modeled energy use, compared with the energy usage of a building once it is in operation is of critical importance. It also is one of the major reasons why the design and construction industry needs a new version of CBECS. This new version should be more accessible, and it should begin with the collection of building metrics that allow for scientific, side-by-side comparisons of pEUI, as reported by the design teams through programs like the AIA 2030 Commitment, the USGBC Building Performance Portfolio, and ASTM's BEPA Standard.

Recent legislation and federal executive orders related to high-performance buildings will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the future of our industry, our economy, and the health and welfare of our country. The AIA was disappointed to learn that the EIA will not release the results of its 2007 CBECS or complete its 2011 survey.

The AIA believes this decision will not only undermine critical work in the near future, but indicates a failure to deliver on a promised effort to help focus on more appropriate decision-making processes by state and local community leaders, owners, developers,

designers, builders, and the public. The AIA strongly urges the EIA to reverse its decision, release the data collected thus far as soon as possible, and take steps to finalize the 2011 survey in a manner that will provide an even more useful basis for decision-making.

If we are to make measurable strides in addressing the environmental impact of the built environment, we must have appropriate and adequate information with which to make the right decisions. That can only happen with the much-needed resources of informed education and research. The EIA is the only organization that can produce the research in a timely fashion. The AIA implores the EIA to reexamine its decision and move forward aggressively to support the needs of the industry and this country.

Again, we thank NIBS for holding this hearing and look forward to working with our partners in the design and construction industry to advance sustainable design and construction.