



Narrative of Priorities

Thank you for attending the USGBC Gulf Coast Winter Happy Hour Advocacy event where we engage with local advocates and legislators in order to build coalition around a dialogue about sustainability and Green Building. Armed with an engage coalition, our goal is to expand this dialogue with legislators and with each other to gain momentum during this legislative session ahead of our USGBC Texas State Advocacy Day scheduled for Feb. 28th at the State Capitol in Austin. If you would like to be a part of this event please let us know by contacting us at advocacy@usgbctexas.org. Even if you don't plan on attending our Advocacy Day in February, please leave us your contact information by dropping a business card.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to transforming the way our buildings are designed, constructed and operated around the world. At USGBC, we work with government, member businesses and allied organizations to support policies and programs that advance greener buildings and communities.

Backed by the strength of tools, community and research, we use direct advocacy, strategic partnerships, campaigns and engagement to drive development of standards, programs and regulations that enable a greener, more resilient and prosperous future.

The USGBC has 4 broad Advocacy **priorities**:

- **Government Leadership by example**
 - Past efforts include: HR 1617 - Green Building Resolution in the 83rd Legislative Session filed by Rep. Mark Strama
 - Current strategy includes:
 - Continue to assert green building as a priority in Texas and make inroad relationships with moderate legislators
- **Private Sector market transformation**
 - Past efforts include: PACE adoption in the 83rd Legislative Session
 - Current strategy includes:
 - emphasize green building as a driving force in the construction industry forward in terms of smart investment and value
 - Highlight green building as a driving force for economic development
- **Raising the bar on codes and regulations**
 - Past efforts include: HB 1736 which allowed the statewide adoption of the IECC 2015 code during 84th Legislative Session. This was signed by the Governor and took effect this year.
- **Community-wide sustainability**
 - LEED for Neighborhood Development - Green neighborhoods are an integral part of the solution to the challenges that are especially acute in cities. USGBC has a Neighborhood Development Guide for addressing these challenges.
 - USGBC Texas supports local sustainability plans such as San Antonio's SA Tomorrow plan as well as civic leadership on Resilient City efforts in Dallas and El Paso



Prior to this event, USGBC Texas Gulf Coast developed three **focus areas** specific to the Gulf Coast area with which to engage subject matter experts:

- **Energy**
 - Past efforts include: HB 1194 which authorized utility cost savings and alternative fuel programs signed by the Governor during the 84th Legislative Session
 - Strategy: build on past efforts to expand green building incentives across the state
- **Water**
 - Past efforts include: HB 1902 which was related to the regulation and expansion of permissible gray water use signed by the Governor in the 84th Legislative session.
 - Strategy: build on bi-partisan appeal of water conservation
- **Neighborhood Development**
 - LEED for Neighborhood Development is a rating system that incorporates the principles of smart growth, New Urbanism, and green building into a national standard for green neighborhood design.

Also prior to this event, USGBC Texas Gulf Coast was able to distribute an online survey to identify our member's **concerns**. Their top three **concerns** are listed here:

- **Incentives for water conservation**
 - Past efforts include: HB 4 and SB 198 - bills that were signed by the Governor during the 83rd Legislative Session
 - Strategy: build on bi-partisan appeal of water conservation
- **Incentives for renewable energy**
 - Past efforts include: SB 700 – related to allocation of money for emissions reductions plans for energy efficiency grant programs for schools signed by the Governor during the 83rd Legislative Session
 - Current strategy includes: build on past efforts to create a **Green Schools Caucus** at the state level.
 - We are actively engaging legislators and a potential Chair of this Caucus.
- **Energy efficiency in existing commercial buildings**
 - Future successes could include PACE adoption in surrounding Gulf Coast counties
 - Current strategy includes: build on past efforts to expand PACE adoption in Texas counties and other green building incentives across the state

Using these **priorities, focus areas, and concerns**, we want to establish dialogue with policy-makers and each other as green building advocates to help find solutions toward a more sustainable future for Texas. We also want to be able to identify advocates with strong voices to carry the message of green building to our local leaders as well as those at the Capitol in Austin.

If you are from a partner organization, please share with us your legislative goals and priorities and use this opportunity to network with one another around these conversations for green building.