

# City of Seattle Building Energy Benchmarking & Reporting Legislation

## Update

The Department of Planning and Development has granted a six month grace period to October 3, 2011 for buildings 50,000 square feet or larger to comply with the energy disclosure ordinance.

### [Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure Director's Rule](#)

additional information on how to comply.

Email comments or pose technical questions to [EnergyBenchmarking@seattle.gov](mailto:EnergyBenchmarking@seattle.gov)

The Seattle Building Energy Benchmarking and Reporting legislation ([Ordinance 123226](#)) requires commercial and multifamily building owners to conduct annual energy performance tracking through the [U.S. EPA's Energy Star Portfolio Manager](#), a free and secure online benchmarking tool. The tool is used in most professional energy audits and is a pre-requisite for the US Green Building Council's LEED rating for existing buildings. View the [program fact sheet](#).

### The ordinance includes three components:

**Benchmarking** — Building owners are required to benchmark the energy performance of each of their buildings.

*What will this do?*

- Establish a baseline of energy performance for each property
- Guide energy efficiency investment decisions

**Disclosure** — Upon request, building owners are required to release building energy performance information to any current or prospective tenant, buyer, or lender involved with a real estate transaction, a lease, or an application for financing or refinancing of the building.

*What will this do?*

- Create an informed market with ability to compare performance information (and future operating costs) between similar properties
- Guide purchasing, leasing and financing decisions

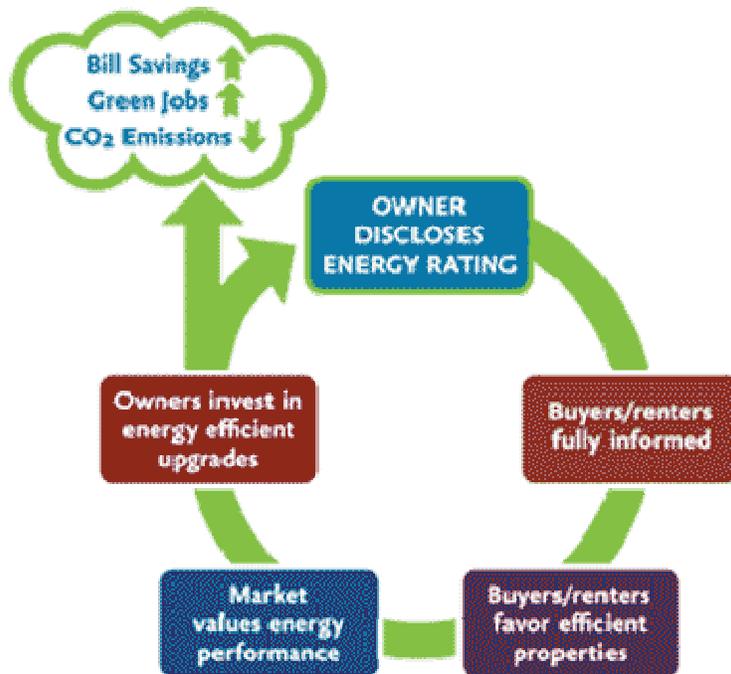
**Reporting** — Building owners are required to authorize the City of Seattle to download annual energy performance data for each building.

*What will this do?*

- Monitor progress toward achieving citywide energy efficiency targets
- Identify market sectors with the greatest needs and opportunities
- Guide development of future policies and incentive programs

### Why has the city adopted this policy?

- Because 26% of Seattle's green house gas emissions are produced from the energy use in our buildings.
- To support the [Green Building Capital Initiative](#) goal to reduce energy consumption in Seattle's existing building stock by 20%
- To allow an informed market to drive energy efficiency improvements



*Image from Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships report: Valuing Building Energy Efficiency Through Disclosure and Upgrade Policies*

## Program outcomes

- Reduce energy waste in Seattle's existing building stock
- Lower energy costs to owners and tenants
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Create job opportunities in the green economy
- Inform better building management and design practices
- Track progress towards resource and emission reduction goals

As more building owners and managers realize the market benefits of measuring and managing energy use, more are seeking ways to improve building performance, from no- and low-cost measures such as retro-commissioning, to deep building retrofits – all of which are contributing to the explosive growth in green building and energy service industries in Seattle, and across the US. Analysis completed by the City shows that building retrofits inspired by this ordinance alone will create 150 new jobs.

*Last Updated:  
May 31, 2011*