

Re: Proposed Green Building Policy
October 25, 2007

Well over 600 U.S. cities have signed onto the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. These cities have pledged to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 7% of 1990 levels by 2012. These communities are taking actions now that will reduce their use of energy, which in turn will improve their air quality, reduce their use of natural resources, and return many dollars to their local economy.

Further, these actions will enhance the quality of life in these cities, thereby attracting new and progressive businesses and people with similar values.

Springfield needs to take action if it is to remain competitive. Once a model in the state for its environmental programs, Springfield will need to take bold steps to close gap and even bolder steps to regain its position of leadership. With the specter of a new coal plant coming on line and non-compliance with EPA air pollution standards, its work is cut out for it.

Today, buildings use 76% of the energy produced at coal-burning power plants. A city policy on building green in the future is a decided step in the right direction, but that policy needs to be a strong policy. Certainly it should be no weaker than those already established by other cities in the state. Arguably, the city should consider a policy that would set the standard. Just meeting minimum standards never distinguished a community.

To ensure that the green building policy proposed by the Springfield city planning department is the strong policy needed, the Sierra Club White River Group suggests the following changes to the proposed resolution:

Strike line 6 of Section 3.

Certification is required by the policies of other Missouri cities and is necessary to guarantee that the performance of the buildings meets expectations and justifies the extra construction expense. The added expense of the certification is small compared to the overall cost of constructing large buildings.

The return on the investment in Section 5 should be extended from 5 to 10 years.

Five years is a very small percentage of the expected life span of well-constructed green building and does not sufficiently take into account the long term returns such buildings provide to the economy and environment

With these exceptions, the proposed policy is strongly supported by the White River Group, and we wish to commend the Planning and Development & Public Works

Departments for taking this far-sighted and bold step toward a sustainable future for Springfield.

Cynthia Andre, Chair
Sierra Club White River Group