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FOUNDERS

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February 25, 2019

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Chairman  
House Education and Labor Committee  
2167 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Ranking Member  
House Education and Labor Committee  
2167 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx,

On behalf of the [U.S. Green Building Council](#) (USGBC), a national nonprofit representing nearly 10,000 member companies and organizations committed to cost-effective and high-performing buildings, I write to urge the committee pass H.R. 865, the “Rebuild America’s School Act.”

In 2016 the [Center for Green Schools](#) at USGBC, the [21st Century School Fund](#), and the [National Council on School Facilities](#) released the State of Our Schools report. The report found a projected gap of \$46 billion the nation must overcome to provide healthy, safe, and adequate school facilities for our children and teachers<sup>1</sup>.

H.R. 865 would provide important investments in schools through the creation of a competitive school construction grant program while restarting and improving the Quality Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program. The bill ensures that major modernizations and newly constructed facilities are built and certified to a high-performance standard (including the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design [LEED] green building rating system). Independent third-party certification holds participants accountable to meet clearly defined goals that optimize building performance<sup>2</sup>. LEED buildings perform better across the board compared to conventional buildings and continue to raise the bar in energy and water savings and waste reduction.

LEED certification in schools is strong. Indeed, there are over 4,000 registered and certified facilities globally<sup>3</sup> (with the vast majority in them located in the United States). In reviewing U.S. school investments made in 2017 and 2018, USGBC found that approximately 10% of the construction funded was LEED certified.<sup>4</sup> This demonstrates

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<sup>1</sup> 21st Century Schools Fund Inc., U.S. Green Building Council Inc., and National Council on School Facilities, “State of Our Schools: America’s K-12 Facilities” (Washington: 2016), available at <https://kapost-files-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/published/56f02c3d626415b792000008/2016-state-of-our-schools-report.pdf?kui=wo7vkgV0wWOLGSjxekON5A>.

<sup>2</sup> GAO-15-667, Page 17

<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> Calculation of LEED project data and Dodge Data construction starts for the education sector.



that certification is already being widely adopted by states and local education agencies across the country to optimize their investment.

We urge passage of H.R. 865 to improve the condition of schools while providing additional benefits to communities across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Howard", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Bryan Howard  
Legislative Director  
U.S. Green Building Council