

HIGH PERFORMANCE PUBLIC BUILDINGS PROGRAM

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND
REVIEW COMMITTEE

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Why a JLARC Study of Washington's High Performance Public Buildings Program?

ESSB 5509 enacted in 2005 directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct an evaluation of Washington's high performance public buildings program by June 2011. The high performance building program requires that state-funded major facilities be constructed using methods that create buildings that save money, improve school performance, and improve worker productivity.

Public Buildings in Washington May Qualify as High Performance Under Several Standards

High performance buildings, also known as "green buildings," attempt to provide a healthy environment for human activity while reducing the impact of that activity on the environment through increased energy efficiency, careful site selection, and innovative design. Initially promoted by the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, the green building movement now encompasses a variety of standards that address the impact of buildings on building occupants and the surrounding environment. High performance public buildings in Washington can be constructed under LEED, the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol, or the Evergreen Sustainable Design Standards.

Three Agencies Supervise High Performance Building Projects

The Department of General Administration, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Department of Commerce are each responsible for ensuring that facilities constructed with state funds under their supervision follow high performance standards for design and construction. Since 2005, an estimated 274 projects have been initiated using high performance standards. The projects include university facilities, state offices, public schools, community facilities, and affordable housing.

Study Scope

JLARC will examine the extent to which the high performance public buildings program has met the legislative intent established in ESSB 5509. In that legislation, the Legislature clearly stated that it expected high performance buildings to "increase student test scores, reduce

worker absenteeism and cut energy costs.” The Legislature also intended that the program offer flexibility in achieving high performance standards and that public agencies and school districts monitor the program to ensure that economic, community, and environmental goals are achieved each year.

Study Objectives

This performance audit will address the following questions:

- 1) Have the Department of General Administration, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Department of Commerce established procedures to effectively monitor the implementation, costs and impact of high performance building standards?
- 2) What has been the cost to implement high performance standards in the design and construction of major facility projects?
- 3) What operating savings in energy, utility, and maintenance costs have been achieved through the implementation of high performance standards?
- 4) What impact has the implementation of high performance standards had on worker productivity and student performance?

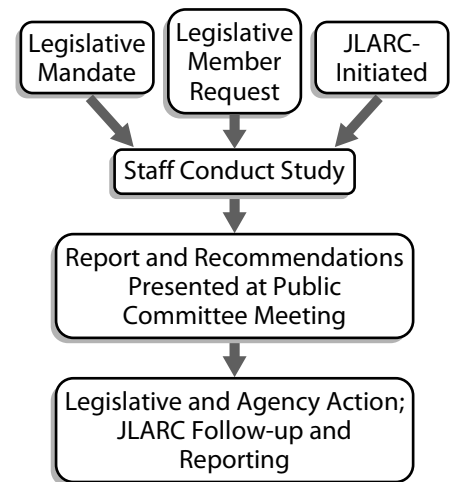
Timeframe for the Study

Staff will present the preliminary and final reports at the JLARC meetings in May and June 2011.

JLARC Staff Contact for the Study

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JLARC Study Process



Criteria for Establishing JLARC Work Program Priorities

- Is study consistent with JLARC mission? Is it mandated?
- Is this an area of significant fiscal or program impact, a major policy issue facing the state, or otherwise of compelling public interest?
- Will there likely be substantive findings and recommendations?
- Is this the best use of JLARC resources? For example:
 - Is JLARC the most appropriate agency to perform the work?
 - Would the study be nonduplicating?
 - Would this study be cost-effective compared to other projects (e.g., larger, more substantive studies take longer and cost more, but might also yield more useful results)?
- Is funding available to carry out the project?