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March 19, 2026

Dear Senator DiPalma and Senator Gallo,

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is pleased to offer our support for S.B. 2765, along with suggested technical changes.

USGBC is a mission-based 501(c)3 organization supporting the development of prosperous, healthy, and resilient communities through the built environment. Through our flagship Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification, USGBC is committed to transforming how our buildings and communities are designed, constructed and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous environment for all.

### Support for Green Buildings Act and Approval Timeline

We support strengthening the implementation and enforceability of the Green Buildings Act through the reestablishment of the existing Green Building Advisory Council as the Green Buildings Act Commission and believe that it is a needed change to the current statute. Regarding any concerns that the provisions requiring approvals from the Commission could delay projects, we suggest that language could be added to the bill to establish a timeframe for approvals and specify that failure to act (approve or return with comments) within the timeframe would constitute a default approval.

### The Value of LEED Certification

We also note the Department of Administration regarding its current practice of not obtaining certification for green building. We urge the current language requiring certification to be retained as experience demonstrates the value for public buildings achieving LEED certification. Requiring certification through third-party verification, as with LEED, helps ensure that the State is receiving and operating the resilient and energy efficient buildings that it paid for—which is sound stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

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We hear from public entities that when certification is not required, many of the energy efficiency and sustainability features are subject to being “value engineered” out of the project.

Having a certification requirement ensures that important factors such as low-emissions building materials, waste reduction measures, and energy efficiency measures are included in the project design to meet the defined public goals.

We also note that research supports that LEED buildings have been shown to have up to 20% lower maintenance costs than conventional commercial buildings, with renovations of existing buildings yielding up to 10% cost reduction.

For example, in a 2018 assessment by the U.S. General Services Administration, its portfolio of high-performance buildings—which include LEED buildings—used 23% less energy and 28% less water—which translates into utility costs saved.

Lastly, there have been claims that seeking certification adds additional costs to a building project; however, rather than focus on this cost in isolation as an upfront cost, it should be considered in the context of the cost savings generated by a LEED building over its entire lifecycle. As demonstrated above, the savings to the State and taxpayers in maintenance and utility cost reductions over the lifespan of a building will likely be much greater than the cost of certification, while also adding value through outcomes such as lower emissions.

### **Recommendation regarding Renovation Threshold**

To address concerns regarding the threshold for renovation projects and the concern that it would trigger small or limited projects to need to comply with the green building standards. We suggest that the bill be modified to clarify the intent, and to authorize the Commission to issue guidance to support interpretation.

Specifically, we recommend striking from the definition of “Construction” the phrase “or for the renovation...” through “of any kind to”; and to add a new definition of “Renovation.” We note that the key definition governing applicability of the Act is found under the definition of “Public major facility project” with separate prongs

for “construction” and “renovation.” Thus, providing a distinct definition for renovation would bring clarity. We suggest that renovation could be defined in a few different ways. In [Massachusetts](#), the state green building policy defines major renovation projects as those projects that include a complete overhaul of a significant portion of the original structure and where the cost of the renovation is greater than 50% of the assessed value of the building. Another option would be “Renovation includes altering, repairing, or improving a portion of an existing public facility, provided that the renovation includes at least 10,000sqft. and at a minimum, significant updates to the energy system, HVAC/R system, or envelope.”

In order to address concerns that this legislation would add unplanned costs to projects already underway, we suggest including a phase-in period, in which these modified provisions would apply to projects that are entering the RFP stage for design.

### **Recommendation regarding References to CHPS**

The Green Buildings Act currently contains reference to the Northeast Collaborative for High-Performance Schools Protocol (CHPS). Last year, [CHPS became part of USGBC’s Center for Green Schools](#). CHPS is no longer open for registration of new projects and will be formally retired after June 2027.

We recommend striking reference to the “Northeast Collaborative for High-Performance Schools Protocol” from the Act and retaining reference to LEED, to reflect the programmatic change.

### **Value of LEED for Schools**

There is immense value in LEED certification for schools—as 90% of our time is spent indoors, and for children, half of that time is spent in school buildings. In 2017, [the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health released a foundational report](#) synthesizing the data on school indoor environmental quality impacts on students and staff. The information is unambiguous—46% of public schools have environmental conditions (e.g. indoor air pollution, mold, pests, radon, pesticides, asbestos, lead, inadequate lighting, and elevated noise) that contribute to poor indoor environmental quality, and it

impacts student outcomes either through inhibited cognitive function or absenteeism due to health conditions such as asthma.

When Ohio invested \$10 billion from a statewide capital subsidy for school improvements, including LEED certification, student test scores rose by up to 9% in the two-years after construction and occupancy of the new or renovated buildings. Ohio is the world leader in green schools, with over 400 LEED certified schools.

Finally, next door in Massachusetts, the state's school construction authority also uses LEED and has sunset the CHPS option.

We at USGBC are happy to serve as a resource for you on this legislation or any other opportunities or concerns related to green building policy.

Thank you,

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cc: Elizabeth Beardsley, Senior Policy Counsel, USGBC