

THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

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House Bill 6284, An Act Concerning Adoption of a Model Energy Code and Green Building Standards

Public Safety and Security Committee

February 3, 2009

AGC/CT Position: Support

Associated General Contractors of Connecticut (AGC/CT), a division of Connecticut Construction Industries Association, is the Connecticut chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America, a national construction contractors trade association. AGC/CT represents commercial, industrial, and institutional construction contractors, subcontractors, material suppliers and professionals serving the construction industry.

AGC/CT **supports** House Bill 6294, An Act Concerning Adoption of a Model Energy Code and Green Building Standards. The bill would require the State Building Inspector and Codes and Standards Committee to revise the State Building Code to include a model energy code and green building standards for certain new construction or renovation projects beginning July 1, 2010. This is a reasonable time period for industry and the state to implement sustainable construction standards.

In 2007, the legislature adopted Public Act 07-242, which mandated changes to the State Building Code to require buildings costing \$5 million or more constructed after January 1, 2009, and renovations costing \$2 million or more started after January 1, 2010, to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design's silver standard or its equivalent. The requirements, which may be waived if the Institute for Sustainable Energy finds that the cost of compliance significantly outweighs the benefits, apply to projects other than residential buildings with no more than four units. Since its adoption, industry groups and the Office of the State Building Inspector have grappled with its requirements.

While AGC/CT supports the public policy goals behind the legislation, the time periods in PA 07-242 were unattainable for the state and industry. Further, some of its requirements simply are not workable. The LEED rating system is not intended as a building code and it cannot be enforced as such, as evidenced by the challenges in drafting the standards into the State Building Code. A committee including the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers Inc. (ASHRAE) and the U.S. Green Building Council has been working for two years to develop a green building standard that building code officials could mandate in lieu of LEED. The committee recently expanded to include more representation from owners, the steel sector and the construction industry.

Meanwhile, House Bill 6294 is a significant improvement and goes a long way to clarify and improve the law. A model energy code is more workable. It makes sense for the design and

construction community and would be more easily implemented and enforced by administrative authorities. The bill should be adopted.

For additional information, please contact John Butts, assistant executive director of AGC/CT or Matthew Hallisey of CCLA at (860) 529-6855.