



## National Institute of BUILDING SCIENCES

1090 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005-4950  
(202) 289-7800 phone  
(202) 289-1092 fax  
[www.nibs.org](http://www.nibs.org)

September 9, 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The National Institute of Building Sciences commends your recognition of the far-reaching impact our nation's infrastructure has on the economy and the American people. Assuring that the country's transportation network and our buildings—particularly schools—provide the best environments for commerce, learning, and innovation is crucial for maintaining our global leadership.

As you have read in our Annual Reports, the Institute was established by Congress in 1974 to serve the public interest by supporting advances in building sciences and technologies for the purpose of improving the performance of our nation's buildings while reducing waste and conserving energy and resources. Through our various councils and programs, we have developed significant expertise in most issues impacting the built environment.

Two Institute programs in particular focus on the priorities outlined in the American Jobs Act. As you have recognized, schools serve a vital role for a community and for the future strength of the country. Since 1997, the Institute has managed the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (NCEF). The Clearinghouse is cited as the largest, most comprehensive, extensively used and highly regarded source of educational facilities research and information in the United States. Up until last year, NCEF was funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Recognizing the valuable information the Clearinghouse provides, the Institute is currently operating NCEF without a funding source.

The Clearinghouse provides guidance, technical information and best practices to design, construction and facilities management professionals for a variety of topics, including safety and security, sustainability practices and building retrofits. Immediately following passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), NCEF became the preferred resource for information on the Act's impact on educational facilities.

In addition to cutting-edge schools, communities depend on infrastructure—including buildings—to maintain economic and social viability. Late last year, you focused on the importance of resilience in the face of both natural and man-made hazards. Working with the

President Barack Obama  
September 9, 2011  
Page 2

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Institute is developing the tools and guidance to bring resilience to the forefront. We have developed rapid visualization criteria to assist communities in identifying risks for tunnels and bridges, buildings and mass transit terminals.

We are also developing a tool that allows building owners and design teams to evaluate the performance of building envelopes for a variety of criteria including blast resistance, durability, thermal resistance (which impacts building energy use) and moisture infiltration.

With the experiences from past natural disasters (including recent flooding in the Midwest, the earthquake in the Mid-Atlantic region, hurricanes along the East Coast, and tsunami threats along the West Coast) and past man-made events, the importance of understanding how buildings perform and developing methods to improve their resilience is obvious. Americans spend 90 percent of their lives indoors and expect buildings to protect them from any hazards they may face. A strong program focused on assuring the nation's buildings are safe, secure and resilient is crucial.

Through these programs and others, the Institute is poised to assist the nation in producing and maintaining high-performance infrastructure. Please consider us a resource as your initiative is implemented and for future building-related activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry L. Green". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "G".

Henry L. Green, Hon. AIA  
President