

PRESS RELEASE

... from the Illinois House of Representatives

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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May Joins Forces With Governor to Urge Illinois Schools to go Green

HIGHWOOD, IL – State Representative Karen May (D-Highland Park) was joined Friday by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to urge all Illinois schools to go green to reduce energy use and create a healthy learning environment.

“We did not inherit the earth from our parents, we borrow it from our grandchildren and we must do what we can to ensure they have a sustainable, healthy environment in which to learn, play and live,” May said.

“Leaders in our government are finally realizing the impact environmental sustainability has on public health and well-being and I look forward to helping improve the way our state can retrofit our schools.”

According to the USGBC, buildings in the United States are responsible for 39% of harmful carbon dioxide emissions and 40% of energy consumption, making green buildings a source of significant economic and environmental opportunity. Greater building efficiency can meet 85% of future U.S. demand for energy, and a national commitment to green building has the potential to generate up to 2.5 million American jobs. On average, green schools save \$100,000 per year, representing a potential \$32 billion in energy savings over the next 10 years nationwide.

“It is important for schools and school districts to make sustainability a guiding principle for building operations, maintenance, grounds and classroom activity,” Quinn said.

In Illinois, Rep. May has introduced House Joint Resolution 45, which will create a Task Force to retrofit three public schools (one each in Chicago, the suburbs, and downstate) as a pilot program. The state will partner with the local Green Building Council and local community groups in these three areas to create a template that can apply to all schools in the state.

“Moving from conventional schools to green schools is one of the best investments we can make,” said Gail Vittori, National Chair of the USGBC. “Green schools can help improve student learning and health, and they have the potential to save taxpayers and schools billions of dollars in energy costs.”

The program was announced at Tarkington School, Chicago’s first LEED-certified school, where test scores have improved 5% a year and students report decreased usage of inhalers for asthma symptoms, according to the principal.

House Joint Resolution 45 is presently under consideration in the House. For more information, visit www.ilga.gov, or contact Rep. May at (847) 433-9100.

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