

FEBRUARY 28, 2011

Progress Through the Gridlock in Washington, DC

Dear Member,

Amid the turbulent winter weather many of us have faced this month, our mechanical insulation priorities are beginning to advance! We're so pleased to announce that Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) has once again stepped up to be our legislation's sponsor and champion in the Senate for our tax incentive. Though our legislation has not been formally introduced, we are building support for the bill and hope to report additional progress soon.

In addition to working with our likely Senate bill sponsor, we have continued our efforts on Capitol Hill to convince other Senators to sign on as cosponsors of the legislation and to identify a House champion. In the month of February alone, we've held more than a dozen productive meetings with House and Senate offices to discuss mechanical insulation and the reintroduction of our tax incentive legislation.

Our meetings with Senate offices were focused on sharing the importance of mechanical insulation in saving energy, lowering costs, and creating jobs—and the benefits tax incentive legislation could bring to all three key priorities. Our message was well received by the Senate staff we met with, all representing offices known to be strong supporters of energy efficiency, including Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). We also met with Senator Mike Johanns (R-NE), who was an original cosponsor last year, and Senator Gillibrand to discuss our strategy moving forward. Yet we are cautious as the environment on the Hill has grown much more conservative.

Our outreach to House members has been mainly focused on Republican members of the House Ways and Means Committee, which is the committee responsible for writing the nation's tax laws. We believe our legislation has the best opportunity to become law if the chief House sponsor is a Republican on Ways and Means. This month, we met with committee members Representative Wally Herger (R-CA), Representative Pat Tiberi (R-OH), and Representative Aaron Schock (R-IL). We also held productive meetings with the offices of Representative Joe Crowley (D-NY), who is also on the tax-writing committee, as well as Representative Judy Biggert (R-IL) of the Energy and Commerce Committee and the co-chair of the High Performance Building Caucus.

Although we have not yet identified a House champion, our conversations with Representative Aaron Schock and his staff, in particular, have been very promising. Representative Schock was a cosponsor of our legislation in the last Congress, and has been outspoken on energy efficiency initiatives. We'd like to shout a big "Thank you!" to all our members in Illinois who are writing letters to Representative Schock urging him to introduce our mechanical insulation installation tax incentive legislation. We'll continue to work with his office, along with other House and Senate offices, to identify additional champions, including a sponsor to re-introduce H.R. 4296, and build further support and explore how mechanical insulation can be included in other related legislation.

We would not be in the strong position we are in today without the support of NIA members who have attended meetings, written letters, and lent assistance to advance mechanical insulation. In the next few months, we will call on you again to write letters to your congressional representatives, share your stories with their staff, and attend public meetings to ensure that mechanical insulation becomes a part of all discussions on energy efficiency. Thank you again for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing many of you and sharing our further progress in person at our annual convention March 23-26.

Regards,
Michele M. Jones
Executive Vice President/CEO