

# Letter to City of Madison alders opposing energy benchmarking ordinance

Dear Common Council member:

A recently introduced ordinance, [Legistar #32255](#), would establish energy benchmarks for businesses in Madison that meet certain size requirements. The Greater Madison Chamber Board supports efforts to educate businesses about ways to reduce their energy footprint but must oppose this ordinance. Requiring businesses to annually report energy usage is cumbersome, costly and ineffective. The energy analysis received will not provide information that isn't already available to the business.

The ordinance requires commercial buildings of 15,000 square feet or larger and multi-family buildings with at least 35 dwelling units to annually report electric, gas and water usage on the EPA's Energy Star Portfolio Manager web page. Every three years, the data must be certified by an energy service professional who is on the city's approved credentials list. Failure to comply will result in a daily forfeiture between \$50 and \$250.

Businesses know that finding ways to reduce energy costs saves them money and is good for the environment. Implying otherwise is insulting. Building improvements and equipment replacement can have significant costs which the business compares to potential energy savings and then determines what they can afford to do.

Instead of mandating business participation, the Chamber supports an educational effort similar to the [Better Buildings Challenge](#) being used by Milwaukee and other cities. Milwaukee's public and private sectors have joined the challenge and undertake retrofits and changes to reduce energy use, in some cases with incentives through the Milwaukee Energy Efficiency Program. If Madison decided to participate in this type of program, the Chamber would be delighted to be an active partner in outreach to the business community. Just as we were a supporting partner in the Clean Air Coalition, a voluntary public/private effort to help businesses and government reduce air emissions.

Education and partnership is the right path forward, not unnecessary mandates aimed at shaming businesses into making building and equipment improvements.

Please contact me if you would like to know more about the Chamber's position or the ordinance.

Sincerely,

Delora

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Vice President, External Relations

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