

Commercial buildings account for 19% of the energy consumed in the United States. The types of buildings that use more than two-thirds of that energy are office and retail buildings, educational and health-care buildings, and lodging. More than half the energy used by commercial buildings goes toward heating and lighting.

Opportunities for commercial buildings include improving the operations and maintenance of existing buildings, and finding ways to deal with the split incentives that often occur between the bill-payers and the tenants of the building. Additionally, in many cases (particularly in schools and public buildings) capital is not always readily available for efficiency improvements.

Increasing energy efficiency of America's buildings could save building owners and managers, tenants, governments, energy efficiency service providers and financiers billions in annual savings. Unlocking energy information and value in buildings could help owners better analyze and act upon building performance data.

The data about how buildings and spaces can use both energy and water has become more widely available and adopting benchmarking and transparency policies help owners track and report their buildings' usage. However, most owners and managers don't act upon the data to achieve greater efficiency and improve their bottom line.

There are many efficiency opportunities in both existing office buildings, and new construction. In existing buildings these opportunities include equipment upgrades, improved building and energy management systems, commissioning, and improved operations and maintenance (O&M). For new construction, using advanced design and technologies is an important means for saving energy.

Building benchmarking (e.g. Portfolio Manager) and building labeling (e.g. ENERGY STAR) are two areas that are getting more attention, particularly in the office building sector.

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