

Public-Private Coalition Releases Pathbreaking Report on Costs and Benefits of Smart Roofs on Affordable Housing

GCCA-Supported Report Shows Positive Impacts of Smart Roof Design on Affordable Housing

Washington, D.C. – (Mar 31, 2015) – In response to growing interest in understanding the large health, economic, social, and energy opportunities for green affordable housing, a public-private coalition released a pathbreaking new study on sustainable roof technologies.

Based on a detailed analyses of four multi-unit affordable housing properties in Washington, DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Los Angeles, the report provides a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of four rapidly growing roof technologies—cool roofs, green roofs, solar PV, and solar thermal—that will be invaluable for policymakers and developers alike.

According to Capital E President and report co-author Greg Kats, “Until now, no city or affordable housing organization had quantified the full set of costs and benefits for these roof options. The positive impacts are large, and quantifying them is essential to enable more effective and comprehensive building and community design to address widespread health and affordability issues, as well as climate change.”

The report authored by Capital E and with partners including the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the Global Cool Cities Alliance (GCCA), the National Housing Trust (NHT), and Enterprise Community Partners found that cool roofs, green roofs, solar PV, and solar thermal provide large financial, health, and environmental benefits in most cities studied. Work for the report was funded through a grant from The JPB Foundation.

“NHT is proud to be a partner in developing this important analysis,” said Michael Bodaken, President of NHT. “The findings—that green, cool and solar roofs can have large financial, health, and environmental benefits—have broad and important implications for the larger affordable housing community, and U.S. cities as a whole. The report is a milestone because for the first time it provides a rigorous and complete cost-benefit analysis that enables housing owners to make efficient use of their roofs, which ultimately strengthens their overall properties and helps them achieve and maintain affordability.”

Tommy Wells, Director of Washington D.C.’s District Department of the Environment (DDOE), notes, “Past research shows that ‘smart’ roof strategies that reduce extreme temperatures in buildings can literally save lives. This new report provides additional justification for cool, green, and solar roofing solutions by showing that they also make compelling financial sense as we work to make DC a healthier and more sustainable city.”

Capital E and its Partners plan to extend this work to estimate the costs and benefits of these roof technologies in low-income areas of cities and cities as a whole. They also plan to expand the scope of future work to include urban surfaces beyond roofs, such as roads, sidewalks, and parking lots.

To download the report and find out more, visit cap-e.com/affordable-housing-smart-roof.

About Capital E

Capital E works with innovative companies, cities, banks, and governments to accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy. It partners with national organizations to research, design, and document the cost-effectiveness of major new green policy initiatives. Capital E is also an early stage investor in low carbon and clean energy companies. Learn more at cap-e.com.

About Global Cool Cities Alliance

The Global Cool Cities Alliance is a non-profit organization that works with cities, national governments, and other stakeholders to advance policies and actions that reduce excess urban heat in order to cool buildings, cool cities, and to mitigate the effects of climate change through global cooling. Learn more at GlobalCoolCities.org or on the Cool Roofs and Pavements Toolkit -- CoolRoofToolkit.org.

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