

Government Innovation

Doug Hensel, Assistant Deputy Director, California Department of Housing & Community Development and Dave Walls, Executive Director, California Buildings Standards Commission on behalf of the “CALGreen Team”

In January 2010, the California Buildings Standards Commission (CBSC) adopted the “Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen).” CALGreen, which goes into effect on January 1, 2011, is a “first in the nation” effort to set standards that will help reduce the negative effect of new buildings on the environment. CALGreen applies to all buildings regulated by state code: residential, commercial, hospitals, and schools.

Important provisions in CALGreen include requiring every new building constructed in California to:

- Reduce water consumption by 20 percent (through better water fixtures and systems)
- Divert 50 percent of construction waste from landfills, and
- Use low pollutant-emitting building materials.

CALGreen also establishes irrigation and energy requirements for large commercial properties. In addition, CALGreen encourages local communities to “green their buildings” through voluntary provisions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve better energy efficiency, and use less wood and steel.

CALGreen is the culmination of three years of work by CBSC and a collaborative team (the “CALGreen Team”) of state agencies and industry stakeholders. In 2007, the Governor directed the CBSC to adopt a building code that would reduce climate change. To achieve that goal, the CALGreen Team reviewed existing codes, programs, and guidelines throughout the country, using that information to craft portions of CALGreen. The CALGreen Team also devised cost benefit ratios for all major portions of CALGreen.

Doug Hensel and Dave Walls provided the leadership for the CALGreen Team.