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33 Broad Street | Suite 300 | Boston, MA 02109
Tel: 617-502-6240 | Fax: 617-502-6236
WWW.ABETTERCITY.ORG

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June 20, 2014

Cambridge City Council
City Hall, 2nd Floor
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Vice Mayor Benzan, Councilor Carlone and Committee Members:

As President & CEO of A Better City, I am writing in support of the City of Cambridge's proposed Building Energy Use and Disclosure Ordinance on behalf of the diverse range of Cambridge businesses and institutions our organization represents. The Cambridge energy use and disclosure ordinance establishes a regulatory framework that supports many of the key goals A Better City (ABC) has worked to advance over the past decade. When fully implemented, this program will not only improve the energy performance of individual properties in Cambridge, but will also increase the economic competitiveness of our region. ABC and its members worked closely with the City of Boston during its development of BERDO to carefully craft a policy that both advanced Boston's climate goals while ensuring that the City remain a thriving center of commerce and an attractive place to do business. We appreciate that the City of Cambridge appears to have drafted their proposed ordinance in line with the goals and objectives of Boston's, which will make it easier for property owners that operate in both cities.

ABC represents many of the region's leading businesses, institutions, and buildings on transportation and sustainability issues. Our membership includes major drivers of our regional economy within the financial, legal, life sciences, higher education, architecture, engineering, and real estate sectors. Through our Challenge for Sustainability program, we have worked directly with more than 100 employers, building owners, and property managers to help them improve the energy performance of their properties and meet their corporate sustainability goals. Since 2009, Challenge participants have reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by 18%.

Climate change directly threatens the economy, infrastructure and quality of life in Cambridge and the Greater Boston region. This threat is real and incontrovertible and requires focused and sustained action by all sectors of society to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The commercial sector is responsible for a significant portion of the region's emissions and many in the business community have aggressively pursued energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities that both improves their bottom lines while reducing their carbon footprint. While these efforts are laudable, they are not enough. The ordinance currently before this council is a critical component of engaging the broader business community in the important work of fulfilling the City's climate goals and will keep our region economically competitive with regions from across the country that are positioning themselves to attract progressive and innovative new companies; and retain and attract a young talented workforce.

It is for this reason that this ordinance is being proposed. Very simply, the city cannot effectively achieve its climate goals unless it can measures current commercial-sector emissions and then monitor ongoing progress. The energy program it will have building owners report is used by

280,000 buildings nation-wide and similar ordinances are currently being implemented in many other U.S. cities including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, San Francisco, Seattle and Minneapolis. Energy reporting and disclosure will soon be a normal part of doing business in many of the country's leading cities. We are pleased to see that the City of Cambridge itself will lead by example and will annually disclose energy and water use for its facilities beginning in 2014.

The Cambridge Energy Use and Disclosure Ordinance

While ABC supports this ordinance, we look forward to working with the City to ensure that this new program is implemented in a way that is not needlessly onerous or overly intrusive and recognizes the considerable investments in energy efficiency enhancements that have been made by property owners over the years. We are encouraging the City to consider the following comments that could greatly improve this initiative:

- **Applicability:** As written, the ordinance would be applicable to all commercial, institutional, and multi-family buildings over 25,000 square feet. This is lower than the 35,000 square feet threshold recently passed in Boston. To reduce potential confusion and to lessen the administrative burden on property owners we encourage the City of Cambridge to align their ordinance with that of Boston's and adjust their threshold to 35,000 square feet.
- **Disclosure:** We appreciate the City's inclusion of language that will implement full disclosure in the program's second year. This will give the City and property owners the necessary time to work out and issues that may become apparent upon submittal of the first year's data. However, while two buildings may look similar from the outside, what happens inside the building in regards to energy use is greatly determined by the type of tenants that occupy and use the space.

ABC encourages the City to include within the ordinance language that enables each property owner the ability to provide contextual information on their building in order to provide a fuller picture of their building's energy use. As well, any public disclosure should clearly distinguish buildings by primary use in order to compare like buildings and avoid potential misrepresentation of a buildings energy performance, as office buildings and lab buildings have very different energy demands. We suggest that the City develop a platform that includes a range of energy metrics beyond just the simple data collected through this ordinance. The critical contextual information included as part of this platform could include elements such as:

- Building environmental certifications such as LEED or Energy Star;
 - Improvements in building energy performance over time;
 - Building energy-related amenities such as advanced lighting upgrades or tenant sub-metering of utility bills;
 - Building age and envelope type;
 - High intensity on-site energy users such as data centers, labs, or trading floors;
- and

- Building owner participation in energy-related initiatives such as the Renew Boston Pacesetters program, the EPA Green Power Partnership or ABC's Challenge for Sustainability.

We believe that, in order for this ordinance to be most effective, these and other critical metrics about building energy performance and property owner sustainability efforts should be presented along with simple energy use data. Given that the intent of this new program is to create a more informed marketplace, a more comprehensive approach to disclosure, that includes both energy metrics as well as critical contextual information, is warranted.

- Follow-up Requirements: As written, the ordinance "might" require a building that scores below 75 on the Energy Star scale to conduct an energy assessment or retro-commissioning project within a to be defined period of time. ABC encourages the City to include increased flexibility within this section to recognize continuous improvement within a facility's Energy Star score overtime and recognizes energy efficiency investments being made at the facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about this important sustainability effort. A Better City looks forward to working with City leaders on this program to ensure that it both furthers the City's sustainability goals while also minimizing any burden to our business community.

Sincerely,



Richard Dimino
President & CEO