



Statement of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board

**In Opposition to Docket #0726**

Energy Scoring/Building Labeling

May 7, 2013

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On behalf of the over 8,000 members of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board (GBREB), we respectfully urge Councilors to vote NO on Docket #0762, the proposed energy “disclosure” law. All of our members, both residential and commercial, will be adversely impacted by this measure. There is no reason to believe that this ordinance will effectively reduce energy use or greenhouse gas emissions. What it will do is increase the cost of owning and renting property in the city.

Our organization has invested significant time, energy and resources both at the national, state and local level to thoughtfully study this issue. Since no reliable studies of mandatory energy labeling programs for commercial buildings in the continental United States have ever been done, GBREB along with our national partners, commissioned an investigation by noted Harvard environmental economist Robert N. Stavins. The March 2013 report “An Economic Perspective on Building Labeling Policies,” observed that research on energy labeling programs in the United States “has not addressed questions related to program performance” and that “there currently is no real evidence that these mandatory programs lead to any changes whatsoever in energy use.” While our national partners have excitedly embraced this thoughtful collaboration as an opportunity to learn more, the same careful deliberation seems to be missing in Boston.

GBREB has proposed, as an alternative, a one year voluntary pilot program that can assist the city in developing an effective program that has an effective track record and tailor a program that fits the City of Boston. Unfortunately, this proposal appears to have been rejected along with an offer to collaborate with all the stakeholders.

GBREB supports energy efficiency, conservation efforts, and helping to preserve and protect our environment. In no way do we oppose policies or programs aimed at conserving energy or protecting our environment; however those policies must not arbitrarily intervene with market forces, assign market value to buildings, stigmatize property, or otherwise interfere with transactions.

Our members are committed to improving the energy efficiency of our homes, apartments and buildings. Despite willingness to move in this direction, current economic conditions have made this increasingly difficult. Placing this burden on owners whether they are a condominium association, affordable apartment building or small business owner is unfair. Meaningful solutions require time and thoughtful collaboration. The City of Boston deserves more than unjustified, symbolic measures that do more harm than good.