

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING GREEN SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, more than 55 million students and more than 5 million faculty, staff, and administrators spend their days in school buildings; and

WHEREAS, schools represent the largest construction sector in the United States -- \$80 billion in 2006 - 2008 - which means that greening school buildings is a significant opportunity to have a major impact on human, environmental, and economic health; and

WHEREAS, green schools using the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building rating system use an average of 35 percent less energy compared to conventional schools and produce a commensurate reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, making green schools an important part of the solution to global warming; and

WHEREAS, children in green schools are healthier and more productive because green schools emphasize excellence in areas of daylighting, acoustics, and classroom design - all of which have a profound impact on children's ability to learn; and

WHEREAS, green schools have superior indoor air quality and thermal comfort, significantly reducing children exposure to chemicals and environmental toxins; and

WHEREAS, the benefit of cleaner indoor air quality - a key emphasis of green schools - have been linked to lower asthma rates, fewer allergies, reduced absenteeism, and increased teacher retention rates; and

WHEREAS, green schools cost less to operate and greatly reduce water and energy use, which generate significant financial savings; and

WHEREAS, if all new school construction and school renovations went green starting today, energy savings alone would total \$20 billion over the next 10 years, according to a recent study by Capital E, and on average, according to the same study, a green school saves \$100,000 per year - enough to hire two new teachers, buy 500 new computers, or purchase 5,000 new textbooks; and

WHEREAS, the modest increase in upfront costs to build green schools -- on average 2 percent - is paid back in the

first year of operations based on energy savings alone; and

WHEREAS, green schools provide a learning experience that transcends the classroom by creating an exhibit of learning where the building becomes an eco-friendly education catalyst and maximizes educational opportunities for generations to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors endorses that in a generation every child in America will attend a green school as the necessary and appropriate goal of our nation -- and the long-term target toward which our individual communities also should arrive.

IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors urges Congress to support federal authorization and funding of K-12 green school demonstration projects throughout the country as well as commit additional research funding to evaluate, understand and enhance the environmental economic and health benefits of green schools.