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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GSA ISSUES NEW GREEN LEASE PROVISIONS

Federal agency updates its leasing requirements for improved energy and water efficiency; IMT advised on ENERGY STAR, plug-load, and other changes

Washington, D.C. – November 7, 2011 – The General Services Administration (GSA) has made changes to its standard lease language in order to improve energy and water efficiency in the office space that it leases. Because the federal agency is one of the nation’s largest tenants—leasing a total of 190 million square feet in more than 8,000 buildings—its move toward greener leasing will reduce energy consumption and costs significantly in those buildings, and will pave the way for wider market adoption of green leasing practices. The Institute for Market Transformation (IMT), a Washington, D.C. -based nonprofit, offered technical guidance to GSA.

“We commend GSA for making these important revisions,” said Cliff Majersik, executive director of IMT. “As one of the nation’s largest tenants, GSA has the power to drive energy and water efficiency in the market through innovative leasing practices. We hope the agency will take additional steps to further green its leases.”

The key changes are:

Energy Star exemptions: Federal agencies are required to lease space in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ENERGY STAR-labeled buildings. But because buildings must have had 50% occupancy in the most recent year to achieve the ENERGY STAR label, some energy-efficient buildings were ineligible for government leases due to low occupancy. GSA has extended the window to 18 months for buildings to reach ENERGY STAR as a way of addressing this problem and improving competition among offerors.

Plug loads: Plug loads can account for more than 25% of a building’s energy use. GSA is measuring actual usage from federal buildings and adjusting the required minimum electrical distribution downward to reflect their findings. This guidance lowers the lease requirement from 7 Watts per square foot to 4 Watts per square foot.

Water: GSA has committed to conserving water by mandating that replacement plumbing fixtures meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s WaterSense guidelines for flush rates. WaterSense-equivalent fixtures reduce toilet flush rates by 20% and urinal flush rates by 50%.

Utility Reporting: For all new leases, the government may require that landlords deliver quarterly utility consumption reports.



In addition, in order to classify more leases as green, GSA is shifting certain paragraphs of standard lease language covering construction and interior finishes from optional to mandatory.

ABOUT IMT: The Institute for Market Transformation (IMT) is a Washington, D.C. -based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting energy efficiency, green building, and environmental protection in the United States and abroad. Much of IMT's work addresses market failures that inhibit investment in energy efficiency. For more information, visit www.imt.org.