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Wolf Administration Breaks Ground on Major Project to Improve Energy Efficiency of State Buildings

Harrisburg – Department of General Services (DGS) Secretary Curt Topper today officially broke ground on a Guaranteed Energy Savings Act, or GESA, project that will improve the energy efficiency of 17 buildings in and around the Capitol Complex and save taxpayers more than \$671,000 annually once complete. The \$22 million project will have no upfront cost to taxpayers. Secretary Topper was joined by Shayne Homan, Vice President, McClure Company – the Energy Service Company, or ESCO – to kick-off the project.

“Energy efficiency improvements are one of the most effective and proven ways to reduce energy consumption, increase cost savings and have a positive effect on our environment,” Secretary Topper noted. “We have been relentless not only in our efforts to identify opportunities where these projects can make a difference but in taking action to get these projects started and completed.

“With the significant price increases that are expected within the utility industry in the near future, it is important for us to be proactive in our efforts to lessen the effect rising utility costs will have on our facilities and our bottom line. GESA projects present us with a prime opportunity to achieve that goal.”

The Capitol Complex GESA project will see the installation of Energy Conservation Measures, or ECMs, in 17 buildings throughout the Harrisburg area with a total footprint of approximately 3 million square feet. Updates will include replacing outdated lighting systems with highly efficient LED lighting systems; replacement of HVAC controls and systems; building envelope improvements for air handling/filtration systems; the installation of enhanced automated controls for optimized building heating and cooling systems; water conservation measures such as low flow toilets aerated sinks and energy efficient water heaters; and more. GESA projects allow commonwealth agencies to make important energy- and cost-saving facility improvements with no upfront cost. Instead, improvements are paid for using energy savings.

A unique feature of the project will be the installation of a geothermal thermal system at the 18th & Herr Streets location that will use the consistent temperature of the water below the ground, coupled with an air-handling system, to provide more energy-efficient heating and cooling to the Capitol Complex. A similar system will also be installed at the Governor’s Residence as part of this project.

“I am proud of the revitalization of the Guaranteed Energy Savings Act program under the Wolf Administration and what we have been able to accomplish,” Secretary Topper said. “Perhaps the best aspect of the program is that the commonwealth pays NO upfront costs for any of these projects, which is an operational benefit for us and an economic benefit for our taxpayers.”

Under the Wolf Administration, several improvements were made to the effectiveness of the GESA program including an innovative financing method that allows the commonwealth to make energy efficient renovations that pay for themselves over time through cost savings achieved from reduced utility consumption, rather than using commonwealth funds upfront for the renovations.

Other improvements include pairing DGS in-house expertise with the Penn State Facility and Engineering Institute to develop effective project scopes and measures; using an Invitation to Qualify, or ITQ, to prequalify Energy Service Companies, or ESCOs, to ensure that they have the skills, expertise and experience necessary to effectively carry out the projects; and moving the entire process for bidding and awarding contracts to an electronic process from document sharing to bid submission and the signature process – effectively shaving off months from the paper-based process previously used.

The commonwealth has invested more than \$219 million into 16 GESA projects. Once complete, these projects will result in energy savings of \$11.3 million annually along with reduced energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to more than 74,000 trees planted annually; removing more than 7,600 cars off the road for a year; and more than 4,100 homes annual energy usage.

Visit the [Commonwealth's GESA program page](#) for more information about the program.

MEDIA CONTACT: Troy Thompson, DGS, 717-787-3197

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