

Obama, Clinton to announce energy saving program

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(AP) -- Enlisting former President Bill Clinton as a partner, President Barack Obama is announcing a \$4 billion effort to increase the energy efficiency of government and private sector buildings, aiming for fuel savings and job creation at no cost to taxpayers.

The proposal, to be announced by Obama and Clinton on Friday, would upgrade buildings over the next two years with a goal of improving energy performance by 20 percent by 2020. The federal government would commit \$2 billion to the effort and a coalition of corporations, labor unions, universities and local governments would undertake the other half.

The contractors who undertake the work would be paid with realized energy savings, thus requiring no up-front federal expenditure.

"Upgrading the energy efficiency of America's buildings is one of the fastest, easiest and cheapest ways to save money, cut down on harmful pollution and create good jobs right now," Obama said in a statement.

The president will make the announcement after touring a downtown Washington office building whose owners have agreed to make more energy efficient under Obama's plan.

The program, known as Energy Savings Performance Contracts, has been in place since the Clinton administration but has been little used. Obama's announcement is yet another in a string of White House

initiatives designed to address the current weak economy without having to seek congressional approval.

Gene Sperling, director of the White House National Economic Council, said private economic analyses indicate that the \$4 billion plan could generate about 50,000 jobs over two years.

The program builds on an initiative that Obama launched in February and that Clinton led through his Clinton Foundation to get the private sector to invest in greater energy efficiency. Clinton already had announced commitments of \$500 million in [energy efficiency](#) projects in June.

The Obama administration helped finance private sector energy upgrades through its 2009 stimulus program. But that money has begun to run out, and advocates of the new initiative say they hope the effort fills the void.

Joining Obama and Clinton will be Thomas Donohue, the president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a long-time proponent of the [Energy](#) Saving Performance Contracts.

"We have been pushing the ESPC program for more than a decade because this holds tremendous potential," Donohue said in a statement. "Despite the benefits of ESPCs, the program has been grossly underutilized."

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