New York City Local Law 84 Benchmarking Report
August 2012

New York City passed a benchmarking ordinance, as Local Law 84 of 2009 (LL84), which is part of a comprehensive effort called the Greener, Greater Buildings Plan aimed to make vital information about building energy consumption available to decision-makers and the public. Specifically, LL84 requires all buildings over 50,000 sq ft to annually measure and publicly disclose energy consumption information.

While the program is only two years old, it has already produced an enormous amount of incredibly valuable data. Data for the first year alone encompasses nearly 1.7 billion square feet – equal to the combined built areas of Boston and San Francisco. The majority of the buildings falling under LL84’s guidelines were multifamily residential, accounting for 80 percent of the total. Office space was a distant second, representing 11 percent.

The enormous survey sample size will allow experts and policy makers to look at a number of variables – including buildings’ age, main fuel types, and locations – to map out larger patterns in consumption.

The legislation is still young, but compliance was relatively high for a new program, with 75% of covered properties reporting figures for the December 2011 deadline. Great efforts are being taken to ensure improved efficiency and participation for the future.

Here were some of the key findings from the data gathered so far:

- Property owners in NYC could achieve significant reductions in energy and greenhouse gas emissions by retrofitting their most energy intensive buildings. If all comparatively “inefficient” buildings were brought up to just the median Energy Use Intensity (EUI) in their category, NYC consumption in large buildings could be reduced by 18% and GHG emissions by 20%.
- On average, buildings in New York City are in line with the rest of the North East, but are more energy efficient than the national average.
- The overall positive score for the city is in part attributable to the old age of many of its large buildings. Old buildings actually score better marks in energy efficiency for a reasons requiring further study. It is not clear, however, that older buildings are more efficient when productivity of the space is taken into account.
- Large office buildings are more energy efficient than small ones. Paradoxically, small multifamily units are more energy efficient than large ones.
- Asthma appear to have a positive correlation with median source Energy Use Intensity (EUI)