



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 1, 2021

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT RELEASES 2019 CHICAGO ENERGY BENCHMARKING
REPORT**

Report shows that properties that have been benchmarking have savings of nearly \$74 million from energy reductions since 2016.

CHICAGO –Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today released the 2019 Chicago Energy Benchmarking Report which largely revealed nearly \$74 million in savings from energy reductions in properties over 50,000 square feet and a rapid decline in carbon emissions per square foot in buildings.

The Chicago Energy Benchmarking Ordinance was passed by City Council in 2013 to unlock energy and cost savings opportunities in buildings over 50,000 square feet. By raising awareness of energy performance through information and transparency, building owners and tenants across Chicago are enabled to make better decisions about how energy is used to power buildings. Energy use in buildings represents approximately 70% of the City's current greenhouse gas emissions, and the City must improve energy efficiency in buildings to meet our long-term climate goals.

"We are incredibly pleased to release the 2019 Chicago Benchmarking Report, which continues to show the decline in emissions for our city," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. The report also raises critical awareness about energy performance, empowers building owners and tenants to make efficient energy choices and will allow us to make progress in accomplishing our city's long-term climate goals. By reducing our energy consumption, we will not only be one step closer toward creating a cleaner Chicago, but also toward fulfilling the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement."

The Chicago Energy Rating System was successfully rolled out in 2019 to increase awareness of energy use. Building owners are now able to display a placard illustrating their building's energy performance to the public. Chicago is proud to be the first city in the nation to require this kind of transparency.

The Chicago Energy Benchmarking Ordinance uses the 1 – 100 ENERGY STAR score to track energy performance, which takes into account occupancy, operational



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characteristics and Chicago's climate zone. The median ENERGY STAR score for all reporting properties in 2019 was 57, a six-point decrease since 2018, but higher than the national median of 50. This indicates Chicago properties over 50,000 square feet are performing slightly better than the majority of comparable buildings in the U.S. Since the ordinance was implemented, improvements have led to a savings of over \$24.6 million per year in energy costs.

Furthermore, there was a 32% uptick in properties that received ENERGY STAR certification since 2016, indicating Chicago properties increasingly meet strict energy performance standards set by EPA. These properties use less energy, are less expensive to operate, and cause fewer GHG emissions than their peers.

The benchmarking report details an analysis of nearly 3,000 properties spanning over 750 million square feet across the city. When comparing total greenhouse gas emissions from nearly 2,000 properties that reported in 2016 and again reported in 2019, total GHG emissions are down 15%, which equates to over 900,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e), equivalent to removing nearly 200,000 passenger cars from the road each year.

"Today we celebrate the release of this report as well as the successful implementation of the Chicago Energy Rating System," said Chief Sustainability Officer Angela Tovar. "Chicago is proud to be the first City in the United States to require this kind of transparency."

Currently, buildings account for 70% of Chicago's greenhouse gas emissions and the City must improve energy efficiency in buildings to meet our long-term climate goals. Reducing energy consumption is a significant step towards the City's continued commitment to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, including a 26-28% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 and reaching 100% renewable energy by 2035. Details about the Chicago Energy Benchmarking Ordinance and the 2019 Report are available on the City's energy benchmarking page at cityofchicago.org/energybenchmarking.

"Part of Chicago's ongoing success with the benchmarking ordinance has been its high compliance rate," explains Gus Sandoval, Project Manager at Elevate Energy. "The City of Chicago's benchmarking webpage provides a variety of user-friendly tools that help building owners and operators during every step of the benchmarking process. Resources include on-demand and live webinars, guides, and links to external sources for utility data assistance and technical service providers."

Chicago is one of 25 cities selected to participate in the American Cities Climate Challenge, an effort to resource cities to take strong action to reduce pollution that



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contributes to climate change and impacts public health. As part of the challenge, Chicago has pledged to take bold action to reduce emissions from its building and transportation sectors. The Lightfoot administration is underway with collaborative efforts to develop and enact strategies that will develop an equity-based climate action plan and move Chicago to reach its climate commitments over the next decade.

To learn more about what the City is doing to reach its environmental goals please visit [City of Chicago : Environment and Sustainability](#)

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