



Environment and Planning Minister Sylvan Richards has pledged to make changes to the Island's building code to promote energy efficiency.

Speaking before a panel discussion on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification in Bermuda, the Minister said such initiatives can help save money in the long term.

“Operating costs of a building should be just as much a consideration as the original design and construction costs,” Mr Richards said. “LEED is a great way to encourage that, but changing the building codes will help even more, and we intend on making this our new reality.”

LEED certification, an internationally recognised programme developed by the US Green Building Council, is intended to encourage practical and measurable green building design, construction and operation.

Mr Richards said that by using less energy, LEED certified buildings save money, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, employees and the community.

“These are all of course things which we at the Ministry of Environment and Planning and, indeed, all of my colleagues in the One Bermuda Alliance strongly applaud,” Mr Richardson said.

“However ‘green building’ goes beyond reducing energy use or improving indoor air quality. It’s a whole-house approach that ultimately benefits builders, buyers and the environment and on a macro scale, it also has benefits for us as a nation.”

He said that an increase in green building projects could help the Island decrease its reliance on fossil fuels, lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, lower medical costs and new jobs.

He noted that according to the US Department of Energy, buildings accounted for 39.4 percent of total US energy consumption and 67.9 percent of total US electricity consumption in 2002.

“Although Bermuda’s make-up does not mirror the US exactly, these figures still help to put into perspective just how important the issue of ‘building green’ truly is if Bermuda is to change our total energy consumption levels,” he said.

Mr Richards also stated that the OBA fully supports the 2011 Energy White Paper, which details how “energy auditing” will help Bermuda make the best of existing technology to reduce the use of electricity.

“Historically, there have been no mandatory requirements for energy efficient building design and few incentives to voluntarily develop and operate energy efficient buildings in Bermuda,” he said.

“As a result, energy and operating costs have not really been a design consideration, and therefore retrofitting buildings can often be an onerous undertaking.

“If we can get those matters of efficiency designed into the building from the very first stages of project planning, then we have a much better shot at sustainability and responsible use of resources.”

Mr Richards was joined in speaking by members of Greenrock and the Bermuda Facilities

Management Association.