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## News Release

### **Mayor Kasim Reed Joins President Barack Obama, Former President Bill Clinton for ‘Better Buildings Challenge’**

*Atlanta celebrated for early progress in energy initiative as President Obama announces more than \$4 billion of investments in program*

**Atlanta** – Mayor Kasim Reed joined President Barack Obama Friday morning at the White House as the president announced that more than \$4 billion of investments have been committed to the ‘Better Buildings Challenge,’ an initiative with a goal of spurring job creation by harnessing private sector investment in energy upgrades in commercial and industrial buildings.

The Obama Administration selected Atlanta as a pilot city in June. Since the launch of the challenge, Atlanta has received commitments from 20 property owners representing more than 16 million square feet of building space, already surpassing its local participation goal for the first phase of the challenge.

Several mayors, corporate leaders, university presidents and labor leaders joined President Obama and former President Bill Clinton to announce the commitments of nearly \$4 billion in combined federal and private sector energy investments and to encourage more participation.

“The City of Atlanta is committed to meeting the goals of this challenge by upgrading building energy performance by a minimum of 20 percent by 2020,” said Mayor Reed. “I am proud that the Better Buildings Challenge is supported by so many Atlanta businesses and organizations, and I am particularly pleased that we have already exceeded our goals in the first phase of this vital sustainability initiative.”

The next step in this long-term sustainability effort will be energy savings assessments at each building through the end of the first quarter of 2012 with the help of resources from local utility partners. Phase one Atlanta participants include the Atlanta Civic Center, Georgia World Congress Center, Morehouse School of Medicine and Fulton County Government among others.

As part of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and the city's Power to Change Plan, the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge aims to implement substantive energy and water efficiency upgrades of buildings in the downtown corridor. By doing so, this will free up business capital to stimulate growth for communities by fostering new business opportunities and creating more sustainable footprints.

On Thursday, Mayor Reed announced the appointment of Denise Quarles as the new director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability. Quarles will be tasked with leading cross-departmental strategy efforts for Atlanta to become a top 10 sustainable city. With the ongoing success of energy upgrades to the Atlanta Civic Center, Quarles will also work to replicate these efforts across city facilities through the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge.

"Thanks to the leadership of Mayor Reed, we are working diligently to achieve and possibly exceed the objectives set by the President's initiative," Quarles said. "The buildings participating in the retrofits will initially exceed 16 million square feet, with broader participation expected over the next phases of the program. I look forward to working with additional building owners and am confident Atlanta will meet its goal by 2020."

According to the White House, the announcement in Washington today builds on 14 private sector commitments announced at the Clinton Global Initiative America in June to make energy upgrades across 300 million square feet and to invest \$500 million in private sector financing in energy efficiency projects. These investments will save billions in energy costs, promote energy independence and, according to independence estimates, create tens of thousands of jobs in the hard-hit construction sector.

#### **About the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Sustainability**

The Mayor's Office of Sustainability is focused on instituting environmental protection practices into Atlanta city government. It aims to do so by improving the city's environmental programs and policies such as water and energy conservation, solid waste and emissions reduction and recycling. To fully expand its commitment to sustainability, Mayor Kasim Reed has pledged that the City of Atlanta will become one of the top 10 most sustainable cities in the United States. To that end, the Mayor's Office of Sustainability utilizes Recovery Act funding across 16 different programs. These programs are designed to motivate and support community efforts that aim to enhance environmental quality, while supporting jobs and long-term economic growth. For more information about Atlanta's efforts to create a more sustainable city, please visit the Office of Sustainability's page within the Mayor's Office tab at [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov).

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