

Congress is giving up on immediate carbon neutrality, but it's not clear if this is real step forward given the complexities involved with offsets. According to the [Washington Post](#):

The promise that the House would effectively reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to zero was a centerpiece of the Green the Capitol program in which the new Democratic leadership sought to use Capitol Hill as a kind of a national demonstration project.

But last week, a spokesman for the House's chief administrative officer said the chamber's leadership had dropped an essential part of the plan, the purchase of "carbon offsets" to cancel out emissions from its buildings. Offsets are a controversial commodity that promises that a certain amount of pollution was captured or avoided elsewhere.

Nevertheless, there has been some real progress:

The Green the Capitol program, announced in June 2007, has made major changes in the way the Hill moves, works and eats.

Four hybrid Zipcars are now available in House garages. The House supply store sells only 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper. And Capitol cafeterias have switched to biodegradable plates, locally grown foods and a composting system that has cut waste.