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OREGON FOREST INDUSTRIES COUNCIL
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SUBMITTED BY: Lincoln Cannon

Testimony on Oregon Forest Products and Green Building Rating Systems
House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
February 23, 2012

Good afternoon. My name is Lincoln Cannon. I am the Director of Forest Taxation and Resources for the Oregon Forest Industries Council (OFIC).

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, commenting on a 2011 US Forest Service report, *Science Supporting the Economic and Environmental Benefits of Using Wood and Wood Products in Green Building Construction (2011)*, said:

> *"Wood should be a major component of American building and energy design. The use of wood provides substantial environmental benefits, provides incentives for private landowners to maintain forestland, and provides a critical source of jobs in rural America."*

McGraw-Hill Construction's "Green Outlook 2011: Green Trends Driving Growth" reports that the value of green building construction starts was $71 billion in 2010, up over 50% from 2008, representing 25% of all new construction activity. The market is expected to grow to $135 billion by 2015, including 40%-48% of the nonresidential market and $14 billion to $18 billion in major retrofit and renovation projects.

The burgeoning growth in green building construction represents a substantial opportunity to reinvigorate Oregon's forest products industry. There is, however, a major obstacle to the realization of this potential opportunity.

Leading national and international green building programs include the USGBC Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), GBI Green Globes, the National Green Building Standard (NGBS) and the International Green Construction Code (IgCC). These programs all provide bio-based materials credits for certified forest products, although not equally, as will be discussed.

Major forest certification systems include the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI, U.S. and Canada) and American Tree Farm System (ATFS, U.S.), Canadian Standards Association (CSA, Canada), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC, international) and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC, international).

Forest products manufactured from trees grown under any of these forest certification systems are eligible for bio-based materials credits in all of the green building programs listed above, with one glaring exception. LEED, currently the dominant non-residential green building program in the U.S., is the only program that recognizes only a single forest certification system, FSC.

Why is this a problem? 4.2 million acres of forestlands are certified in Oregon; 2.9 million acres (68%) under SFI, 0.8 million acres (19%) under ATFS, and 0.56 million acres (13%) under FSC. 87% of certified forests in Oregon are not FSC-certified.

On the manufacturing side, the situation is even more pronounced. Hampton Associates, a major Oregon forest products manufacturer, estimates that less than 0.5% of the certified lumber manufactured from their Oregon mills is FSC-certified. The vast majority of certified wood grown and milled in Oregon does not qualify for the wood credits in LEED that are provided under every other green building program.

To claim the LEED wood credit for an Oregon building, FSC wood would have to be imported, likely from outside the country – 90% of FSC certifications are outside the United States – rather than using Oregon grown and manufactured wood products. That makes little sense from an environmental or economic perspective. The result has been that the wood credit is one of the least utilized credits in the LEED rating system, because FSC wood is difficult to obtain and, if available, expensive.

LEED has revaluated their stance on forest certification on several occasions, most recently in the development of LEED 2012. Each time, their membership has voted to continue support for accepting only FSC wood. It is unlikely that their stance will change in the near future.

In contrast to the closed LEED standard-setting process, Green Globes and National Green Building Standard were vetted through the voluntary open American National Standards Institute (ANSI) consensus process, through which they achieved designation as American National Standards.

In 2011the Governor of Maine issued an executive order precluding the use of LEED for green building certification of public buildings in Maine until they recognize SFI and ATFS forest certifications. OFIC believes Oregon should follow Maine's lead in recognizing only green building rating systems that reward the use of forest products manufactured from wood from Oregon's sustainably managed forests, regardless of certification system. Unless and until LEED meets that test, its use should not be encouraged in Oregon.

Attachments (additional information):

Feb 14, 2012 -- *Testimony on HB 4166*. Before the Oregon House Energy, Environment and Water Committee. Dennis Creel, Forestlands Manager, Hampton Affiliates.

Dec 7, 2011 – Executive Order, *Regarding the Use of Green Building Standards in Public Buildings*. Paul LePage, Governor of Maine.

Nov/Dec 2011 -- *The Good News About Green Building*. Western Forester. Cassie Phillips and Edie Sonne Hall.

Nov/Dec 2011 – *Green Building Systems in North America: How Do They Compare?* Western Forester. Chris Knowles and Arijit Sinha.

Aug 19, 2010 -- *Green Buildings: Open Wood credits to Oregon Products*. Oregonian Op-ed. Marvin Brown, Clint Benz, David Ford and Stave Wilson.

Aug 27, 2008 – *The Differences Between Green Globes and LEED*. Pro Sales Magazine Online. Victoria Markovitz.

HAMPTON RESOURCES, INC.
HAMPTON TREE FARMS, INC.
MID-VALLEY RESOURCES, INC.
AGENCY CREEK MANAGEMENT CO.

Testimony on HB 4166
House Energy, Environment and Water Committee
February 14, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of House Bill 4166.

My name is Dennis Creel. I am the timberlands manager for Hampton Affiliates, a family-owned Oregon company headquartered in Portland.

Hampton Affiliates employs about 1,600 people, primarily in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. Hampton's annual lumber production capacity is in excess of 2 billion board feet, making us one of the largest softwood lumber manufacturers in the country. Hampton also has wholesale and distribution operations that deliver building products to customers all over the world.

In Oregon, Hampton operates mills in Tillamook, Warrenton and Willamina with a combined capacity of 940 million board feet per year, and directly employs over 600 people with an annual payroll of $37 million. Hampton owns 91,000 acres of sustainably managed timberlands, and its wood procurement and land management systems are certified through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). In addition, virtually all Hampton's logging contractors are professionally trained through SFI programs.

Of the certified volume manufactured in Hampton's Oregon sawmills, 80% is certified under SFI, 19% under the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), and less than 0.5% is certified under Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards. SFI is the predominant certification system used by large private forest landowners in Oregon, while the ATFS provides certification to smaller family woodland ownerships.

As a result, most Oregon-produced lumber does not qualify for the same preferred treatment as FSC-certified wood under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building standards. In contrast, Green Globes and most other national and international green building standards treat wood certified under SFI, ATFS and FSC equally.

In general, but particularly for an Oregon tax credit for energy efficient buildings, Hampton believes it is wrong to encourage green building systems that unfairly discriminate against Oregon forest products and manufacturers. HB4166 takes a step in the right direction towards eliminating that inequity, and Hampton fully supports the bill.

OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 27 FY 11/12
DATE December 7, 2011

AN ORDER REGARDING THE USE OF GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS IN STATE BUILDINGS

WHEREAS, the State of Maine is dedicated to the goals of energy efficiency, environmental protection, and economic growth;

WHEREAS, the State should undertake initiatives that foster cost efficient and ecologically responsible buildings;

WHEREAS, reducing long-term operations and maintenance costs is essential to the economic health of our State;

WHEREAS, so-called "Green Building" standards have the potential to reduce waste in building;

WHEREAS, said standards have certain requirements on the harvest of natural construction materials, some of which recognize equally several forest certifications systems currently utilized in Maine and North America;

WHEREAS, Maine is a national leader in the processing and availability of construction materials that are certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, American Tree Farm System, and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification systems; and

WHEREAS, recognizing all of these certifications equally will help promote sustainable forestry in the State of Maine and help protect and develop thousands of good jobs while maintaining our strong outdoor heritage;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Paul R. LePage, Governor of the State of Maine, hereby order as follows:

1. The design, construction, operation and maintenance of any new or expanded state building shall incorporate "Green Building" standards that give certification credits equally to forest products grown, manufactured, and certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, American Tree Farm System and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification systems.

2. The design, construction, operation and maintenance of any existing state building to be renovated shall incorporate "green building" standards that achieve significant energy efficiency and environmental sustainability relevant to the scope of the renovation, provided this can be accomplished on a cost-effective basis, considering construction and operating costs over the life cycle of the improvement.

3. The Department of Administrative and Financial Services, through the Bureau of General Services, is authorized to call upon any department, office, board, commission or agency of state government to provide such information, resources or other assistance deemed necessary to discharge its responsibilities under this Order. Each department, office, board, commission, and agency of this state is required to cooperate with the Bureau of General Services and to furnish it with assistance necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Order. Such assistance may include sharing of information, the assignment of staff, and the provision of support services.

4. Each department, office, board, commission or agency of state government is directed to identify any policies not in conformance with this Executive Order, bring them into conformance and submit them to the Governor's Office by March 1, 2012.

5. For the purposes of this order, a "state building" includes any building owned, constructed, or acquired by the State of Maine or any department, office, board, commission, or agency thereof, including state-supported institutions of higher learning. School administrative districts and municipalities are not subject to the requirements of this Order.

The effective date of this Executive Order is December 7, 2011. This Executive Order supersedes Executive Order 08 FY 04/05.

Paul R. LePage

Paul R. LePage, Governor

The Good News About Green Building

BY CASSIE PHILLIPS AND EDIE SONNE HALL

Cassie Phillips

Edie Sonne Hall

Green building means structures and processes that are environmentally responsible and resource efficient, taking into account the life cycle of the building and the materials in it. Green building includes design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition.

Weyerhaeuser's commitment to green building begins on the forest floor. Over half of the wood products we produce in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, and Uruguay come from certified forests, and all of the wood we produce in North America comes from responsible sources, using the categories described in ASTM D7612-10, Standard Practice for Categorizing Wood and Wood-Based Products According to their Fiber Sources.

The forests Weyerhaeuser owns or manages in North America are certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI®) standard, and our forests in Uruguay are certified to standards adopted by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). We buy wood from other forest owners, many of them family forest owners (who make up the majority of wood suppliers in the U.S.) and many of whom are certified to the American Tree Farm System.

The next step toward green building is manufacturing. Weyerhaeuser's lumber, panels, and engineered wood products are all independently certified by the ICC Evaluation Service under its Sustainable Attributes Verification and Evaluation™ (SAVE™) program, and can earn credits under all major green building programs, including:

- the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Green Building Rating System (LEED);
- the Green Building Initiative's ANSI/GBI 01-2010 Green Building Assessment Protocol for Commercial Buildings (GBI);
- ASHRAE 189 Standard for the Design of High-Performance Green Buildings (ASHRAE 189); and
- ICC 700 National Green Building Standard, developed by the National Association of Homebuilders and International Code Council (National Green Building Standard).

Weyerhaeuser also understands green buildings because we build them that way ourselves. Quadrant, Weyerhaeuser's homebuilding subsidiary in Washington, was the first homebuilder in the Puget Sound region certified as an Energy Star® builder. Another subsidiary, Pardee, was the first California production home builder to build an entire community to the National Green Building Standard.

Building green with wood is good news for the environment and it's also good business. By encouraging the use of wood, green building standards can help reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Wood outperforms other materials in "embodied energy"—the energy used in manufacturing and transporting construction materials—and it is unique among structural building materials because of its ability to store carbon over the long term. The structure of a wood-framed house can lock up as much or more carbon than the sum of the greenhouse gases emitted during harvesting, transportation, and manufacturing. And, at the end of the building's life, the wood can be reused, recycled, or used to produce energy.

Using wood translates to jobs for mill and forest workers—that's good news for American rural communities. And building green with wood also keeps forestland owners growing trees. Green building standards that recognize the goodness of wood tell forest owners that tomorrow's markets will reward their investments in forestry today. Countries with the lowest rates of deforestation occur in regions with the highest rates of industrial wood harvest and forest product output (www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/37326).

Not all standards understand or promote the benefits of wood. One green building standard, LEED, gives steel and concrete credit for recycled content while giving wood no credit as a material, despite its relative benefits. LEED credits only FSC-certified products, regardless of source, and so puts U.S. wood products at a compet-

PHOTO COURTESY OF GARY DARBY, WEYERHAEUSER COMPANY

Quadrant Homes, one of five homebuilding subsidiaries of Weyerhaeuser Company, builds homes in Washington State. Quadrant customers may have a home "Built Your Way" or may chose from newly-built homes in a number of locations around the Puget Sound.

itive disadvantage because FSC standards are often lower outside the U.S. We have experience in Uruguay, Brazil, New Zealand, Australia, China, and eastern Canada where FSC standards reflect the norms for good commercial forestry and FSC certification is commenplace. The source of the conflict around forest certification is not that LEED gives credit for FSC wood from Oregon and Washington, where FSC standards are highly restrictive and have limited uptake, over SFI wood from Oregon and Washington. It's because LEED gives credit for FSC wood from these and other countries over SFI wood from Oregon and Washington, where SFI wood is grown under equal or better environmental standards.

Because FSC standards are different in different places, the general claim inherent in LEED's wood credit—that FSC-certified products, regardless of source, come from better environmental practices than products certified to other standards—can mislead consumers. U.S. advertising law, as reflected in the Federal Trade Commission's Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims, or "Green Guides," requires specific, substantiated claims of both environmental benefits and the basis for comparing products. We have urged the USGBC to redesign the wood credits in LEED by applying the FTC's requirements.

We aren't the only ones to recognize that LEED's wood credit is neither green nor fair. The U.S. Forest Service released a study in October 2011 expressly recognizing that sustainable forest products are produced under all credible standards, including SFI, FSC, and Tree Farm. The study also promoted voluntary, consensus green building standards, ones that are adopted through processes characterized by openness, balance of interests, due process, an appeals process, and consensus decisions. This is already federal government policy, expressed in OMB Circular A-119 and the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-113). Voluntary, consensus processes are also important because they offer some protection—although not immunity—against private liability under U.S. antitrust laws.

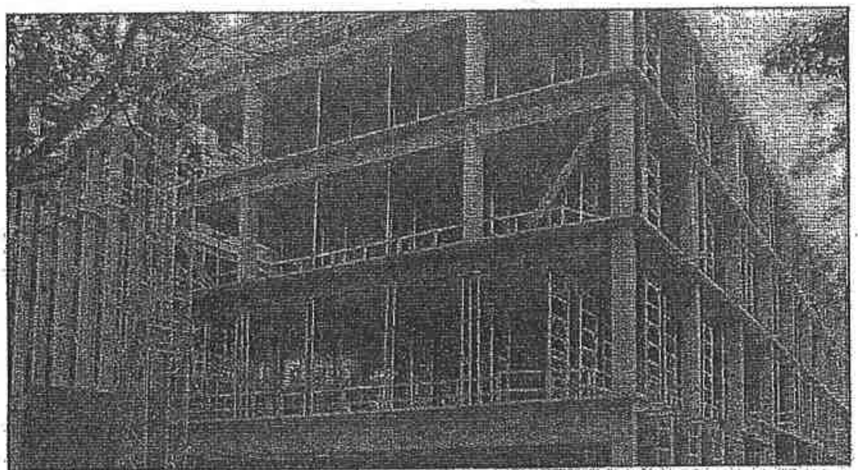


PHOTO COURTESY OF CANADIAN WOOD COUNCIL

The University of British Columbia recently constructed a new Earth Systems and Science building on their campus in Vancouver. This beautiful wood building complex includes two- and five-story towers connected by an atrium. The building design incorporates Weyerhaeuser's Trus Joist® TimberStrand® laminated strand lumber panels into a unique floor system that combines wood, concrete and one inch of rigid foam insulation, known as an HBV building system.

The high bar for voluntary, consensus standards is set by those designated by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as American National Standards. The LEED standards are not ANSI-designated, and the USGBC has never used an open, inclusive, consensus-based process to address the wood issue. The USGBC's long-running effort to fix the problems with the wood credit did not meet any of the decision-making requirements in federal policy, and not surprisingly, the problems remain.

Fortunately, both the National Green Building Standard and GBI are American National Standards, developed through the full consensus processes, and ASHRAE 189 is equivalent. These are the standards that government agencies should be using for green building projects. The International Green Construction Code is also being developed through full consensus processes, and once approved, should serve as the model green building code for adoption by states and local governments.

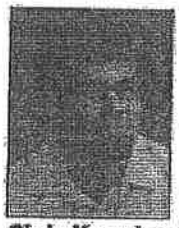
Standards that recognize the benefits of wood for green building are good news for the environment and the economy, especially in the Pacific Northwest.

We'll leave the last word to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack: "Wood should be a major component of American building and energy design. The use of wood provides substantial environmental benefits, provides incentives for private landowners to maintain forestland, and provides a critical source of jobs in rural America." ◆

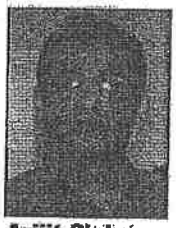
Cassie Phillips is vice president, Sustainable Forests and Products, Weyerhaeuser, in Federal Way, Wash. She can be reached at 253-924-4166 or cassie.phillips@weyerhaeuser.com. Edie Sonne Hall is manager, Sustainable Forests and Products, Weyerhaeuser, in Federal Way, Wash. She can be reached at 253-924-3292 or edie.sonnehall@weyerhaeuser.com.

Green Building Systems in North America: How Do They Compare?

BY CHRIS KNOWLES AND ARIJIT SINHA



Chris Knowles



Arijit Sinha

In North America, there are many green building rating systems representing local, regional, and national markets, including LEED, Green Globes, Energy Star, and the National Green Building Standard. Some of these systems focus solely on individual buildings, whereas others focus on neighborhoods and communities. All of these systems have market recognition, and many of them have been developed based on similar principles. Each of these systems has the goal of reducing the environmental impacts of a building over its life cycle. The overall objectives of these green building rating systems include reducing energy use, implementing techniques to save resources and reduce waste, reducing water use and managing wastewater, using more environmentally friendly materials, and improving indoor environmental quality. Although there are multiple green building rating systems in North America, there are clear market leaders with the LEED system being recognized as the major system for non-residential and multifamily residential construction, and the National Green Building Standard being recognized as the major system for residential construction.

There is no shortage of opinions on green building rating systems among those involved in green building markets. While there is significant overlap among these rating systems, the differences between these systems is the topic of debate. One of the most hotly debated differences is the way they provide credit for certified wood products. Below we will discuss the criteria for two of the major green building rating systems for non-residential construction: LEED and Green Globes. A specific focus will be placed on the role of wood in these green building rating systems.

LEED

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green building rating system, commonly referred to as LEED, was initially developed by United States Green Building Council (USGBC) in March 2000. The rating system has undergone several revisions since it was initially released with LEED 2009 being the current version. LEED 2009 contains the following specific rating systems: 1) New Construction (NC); 2) Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance; 3) Commercial Interiors; 4) Core and Shell; 5) Retail; 6) Healthcare; 7) Homes; and 8) Neighborhood Development. Each of the rating systems is composed of 100 points, which are divided among these five categories: Sustainable Sites; Water Efficiency; Energy and Atmosphere; Materials and Resources; and Indoor Environmental Quality. Additionally, up to 10 bonus points are possible through innovative design and consideration of regional priorities. The LEED system rates buildings at four levels: certified, silver, gold, and platinum.

Green Globes

The Green Globes rating system was developed in 2000 based on the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). Green Globes operates in both Canada and the U.S. and is operated by the Green Building Initiative (GBI) in the U.S. In 2005 GBI became the first green building organization to be accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a standards developer. The first official Green Globes ANSI standard was issued in 2010. Under this standard, buildings are divided into seven categories: 1) project/environmental management; 2) site; 3) energy; 4) water; 5) resources; 6) emissions; and 7) indoor environment. The Green Globes system has two categories for projects: New Construction and Continual Improvement for Existing Buildings. The Green Globes system rates buildings at four levels, ranging from one to four globes.

The LEED and Green Globes systems have significant overlap, representing approximately 85 percent of their rating systems. For example, both systems provide credit for material harvested, manufactured and/or sourced regionally, or within 500 miles of the job site. This is an important consideration for wood products as most major markets are with 500 miles of forest resources and manufacturing capacity.

There are, however, some significant differences between the two systems. The Green Globes system is often viewed as a more user-friendly system, with a web-based format that requires no special paperwork. The LEED system, by contrast, is more paperwork intensive and has a requirement for LEED consultants throughout the design/build process. The result is that the Green Globes system is often less expensive than the LEED system. However, LEED is much more inclusive of different types of construction and various end uses within the built environment.

Another significant difference between the two systems is that the Green Globes system puts slightly more emphasis on life cycle assessment (LCA) of materials and products for selecting building materials. LCA is increasingly becoming the tool to assess the overall "green" characteristics of a material including embodied energy, environmental performance, and service life of the material. Both LEED and Green Globes do not address LCA adequately. However, Green Globes provides consideration to the entire life cycle of the building material when selecting materials. The LEED system is currently under revision and it is likely that a greater emphasis on life cycle analysis will be incorporated

into the new rating system.

With respect to wood products, both systems provide credit for the use of certified wood. However, one significant difference is that the LEED system only provides credit for wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) while the Green Globes system provides credit for wood certified by FSC, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS).

This difference has caused strong reactions from many in the forest industry, which has resulted in LEED evaluating their stance on forest certification on several occasions. Each time this has been brought to a vote of their membership, strong support has been provided for only accepting wood from the Forest Stewardship Council. It is not likely that this stance will change in the near future. The crux of the issue is related to the perception of forest certification schemes. Design professionals generally view FSC as originating from non-governmental environmental groups and the other certification schemes as responses from the forest products industry. As a result, they feel that FSC is the gold standard from an environmental perspective and all other schemes provide lesser environmental protections.

Non-residential construction has always been an important market for wood products. However, the share of wood products in the non-residential construction market has always been fairly low, with steel and concrete dominating this market. The residential construction market, particularly single-family, has consistently been the largest market for structural wood products. While LEED has developed a rating system for homes, the National Green Building Standard has developed into the market leader for residential construction.

National Green Building Standard

The National Green Building Standard was established in 2007 through collaboration from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and the International Code Council (ICC). This standard is the first and only residential green building rating system to receive ANSI accreditation. The standard is overseen by the NAHB Research Center. The standard has four threshold levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald. In order to comply with the standard, a minimum number of features must be incorporated in each of the following categories: lot and site development; energy, water, and resource efficiency; indoor environmental quality; homeowner education; and global impact. The National Green Building Standard provides credit for certified wood in a manner similar to Green Globes, providing the opportunity to receive credit for wood certified under multiple certification schemes.

What's next?

In summary, the main challenges in acceptance of wood and wood-based materials in the green building industry are twofold. In the residential sector, wood is the predominant material of choice and is favored in the National Green Building Standard. However, with LEED entering into the residential construction sector, challenges do exist for non-FSC certified wood and wood products. Similarly for nonresidential commercial buildings, with LEED being the market leader, there is no incentive to use non-FSC certified wood in the rating system.

In addition to that, there are two more conventional and popular building materials to compete with, i.e., steel and concrete. In fact, the credit for certified wood is one of the least utilized credits in the LEED rating system. The primary reason for this is that FSC wood is generally more expensive than wood that is not certified. In the construction industry cost is king, so the less expensive option is generally the one that is selected. A secondary reason often given by specifiers is a difficulty in finding FSC certified material when it is needed. Most of the green building standards do not acknowledge the environmental benefits of wood and wood products. These advantages of wood may result in more resource and energy efficient buildings over their life cycle, which is the underlying objective of any green building standard.

While it is not clear what green building rating systems will look like in the future, it is clear that green building rating systems are moving toward performance-based systems. Some evidence of this move is the creation of the International Green Construction Code (IgCC). The IgCC, created by the International Code Council, will become a building code in early 2012, with most jurisdictions adopting it by 2015. It is divided into two parts, with one being similar to LEED or Green Globes, and another part dealing with code and jurisdictional requirements. Material selection in IgCC includes material reuse, recycled content, recyclable materials, bio-based materials, and indigenous materials. Under the bio-based materials, a wide number of wood certification programs are listed, including SFI, FSC, and any system conforming to Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) standards. Moreover, ICC provides third-party verified sustainable attributes of building products, called Validation of Attributes Reports (VAR). The VAR provides a benchmark for the green building standards and codes to refer to while selecting a material. IgCC strives to be the basis of all green building rating systems in the future. USGBC is currently in the process of developing a new LEED rating system that is expected to be released in 2012. The drafts that have been released for public comments show a move toward a more performance-based system. ◆

Chris Knowles is assistant professor, Wood Science and Engineering, Oregon State University, Corvallis. He can be reached at 541-737-1438 or chris.knowles@oregonstate.edu. Arijit Sinha is also an assistant professor in OSU Wood Science and Engineering. He can be reached at 541-737-6713 or arijit.sinha@oregonstate.edu.

Web Resources

For more information on rating systems, visit the following websites:

LEED: www.usgbc.org

Green Globes: www.greenglobes.com

National Green Building Standard: www.nahbgreen.org

International Green Construction Code: www.iccsafe.org

Green buildings: Open wood credits to Oregon products

Published: Thursday, August 19, 2010, 6:10 PM

 By **Guest Columnist**

By Marvin Brown, Clint Bentz, David Ford and Steve Wilson

Green building represents a nearly $50 billion industry in the United States and will only continue to grow. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system has helped elevate the importance and number of green buildings being constructed, and that's a significant step forward for energy and water savings, the planet and our health.

However, when it comes to forest products, the LEED system shortchanges North America's and Oregon's forests by not awarding credit to wood certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and American Tree Farm System. Instead, LEED only awards credit to wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which often comes from overseas.

We aren't the only Oregonians who feel it's necessary to open LEED. U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader of Canby recently demonstrated leadership on this issue by spearheading a letter to the U.S. Green Building Council, the developer of LEED, calling for recognition of all credible forest certification standards. Nearly 80 members of Congress signed the bipartisan letter, including Reps. David Wu of Portland and Greg Walden of Hood River.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski has called on the Green Building Council to change its wood credit policy. Additionally, a petition with nearly 6,000 signatures from around the world supporting an inclusive LEED policy was delivered to the council earlier this month.

An exclusive LEED policy is a problem for Oregon, where forestry is crucial to the economy. There are nearly 30 million acres of forestland in Oregon, covering 48 percent of the state. SFI and the American Tree Farm System provide the standards for prudent forest management on more than 5 million acres of our state's land, and Forest Stewardship Council standards are used on 500,000 acres. All three are credible certification programs, and we have personally seen how they each work on the ground. With a lifetime of first-hand experience and extensive background in the application of forest certification programs in our state, we find it bewildering that the Green Building Council has not opened its LEED policy to all credible forest certification programs.

Opening LEED would benefit our forests, our economy and green building in Oregon and throughout North America. Responsible forest management supports jobs. Limiting which certified wood can be credited in LEED projects reduces demand for wood from SFI and Tree Farm certified lands and puts forestry jobs at risk.

Additionally, the presence of multiple forest certification programs enhances the quality and rigor of each program. The competition spurs each program to continuous improvement and helps support varying interests among the many different types of landowners. More options for forest certification allow more landowners to get their forests certified, improving forest management and meeting the demand of the growing green building industry.

In Oregon, our forests and communities benefit from the improvements resulting from the work of all organizations that certify sustainable forest practices. However, the advantages to our forests and economy are severely limited by LEED's exclusive policy. It's an injustice that most of our state's wood from responsibly managed forests is not eligible for the wood certification credit in green building projects here and throughout the United States.

It's time for the U.S. Green Building Council to change its outdated LEED policy on wood. The organization needs to recognize and credit all credible third-party forest certification standards for the good of Oregon forests, the economy and the future of green building.

Marvin Brown is the Oregon State Forester and serves as Chair of the independent board of directors for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®. Clint Bentz serves as Chair of the American Forest Foundation's Board and is a family forest landowner who resides in Scio. David Ford is Executive Director of Oregon Small Woodlands Association and is a family forest landowner who resides in Beaverton. Steve Wilson is a member of the Oregon Board of Forestry and is Secretary-Treasurer of Woodworkers District 1 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

The Differences Between Green Globes and LEED

http://www.prosalesmagazine.com/green-building/the-differences-between-green-globes-and-leed.aspx

The two commercial green building standards have many similarities, but there are some spots that they don't share

By: Victoria Markovitz
August 27, 2008

The famous Coke vs. Pepsi debate can compare to the competition between green building standards. Most standards are made of the same basic ingredients, but they are battling it out to become the preferred product. While the Coke vs. Pepsi race remains close in the United States, there seems to be a clear leader in commercial green building programs. And some obvious characteristics do set the systems apart. But, like Coke and Pepsi, many people are still unsure as to which system is better.

Run by the U.S. Green Building Council, 31 states recognize the LEED green building standard, and 1,212 commercial new construction projects have been certified under that system. Green Globes, run by the Green Building Initiative, is recognized in 18 states, and only 15 buildings have gained certification.

The systems, however, are more similar than they are different.

Both standards cover similar grounds, such as site sustainability, energy efficiency, water efficiency, resource efficiency, and indoor environmental quality. They have four possible levels of certification, require third-party certification, and have a minimum amount of points that builders must attain in each section.
But there are differences. One issue holds particular importance with dealers: forest certification systems. Green Globes awards points for a variety of certification systems, including the American Tree Farm System, the Forest Stewardship Council, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and other programs that the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification recognizes. LEED only recognizes FSC-certified wood, but the USGBC is working to include other certifications.

A big issue that worries professionals is the added cost of building green. Some say Green Globes is cheaper than LEED. Green Globes certification costs usually range from $3,000 to $7,000, says Mark Rossolo, director of state and local outreach for the Green Building Initiative. LEED certification for New Construction costs $2,000 on average, but certification fees for buildings of more than 500,000 square feet can go beyond $20,000. The paperwork for Green Globes can be completed online, and the online system offers feedback. This reduces some of the "soft cost" of green building, says Rossolo.

Some say Green Globes is also more flexible. The system has a protection against "nonapplicable criteria." If a builder marks a criterion as nonapplicable, then he or she will be excused for not gaining points in those areas. For example, if a building code overrides a criterion, then the criterion can be marked as nonapplicable. Another example would be if a building does not have elevators and a criterion deals with improving elevators.
However, some argue LEED is more effective.

LEED for New Construction requires that buildings "exceed ASHRAE 90.1 2004 by at least 14%, which can lead to significant energy reduction," says an American Institute of Architects' report comparing three green building rating systems. Green Globes encourages energy reduction, but does not require it. LEED also calls for a minimum indoor air quality performance, while Green Globes does not. LEED makes it mandatory that builders have "some documentation of the initial building energy and operational performance through fundamental commissioning," says the AIA report, but Green Globes does not.

Green Globes does include points related to life-cycle assessment, while the current version of LEED does not. Life-cycle assessment analyzes how green a product is from its manufacture to the day it is no longer in use. An upcoming version of Green Globes will include a built-in tool that calculates how environmentally friendly a product is according to life-cycle assessment. This gives Green Globes "a very holistic approach in ensuring that we're getting the most environmentally friendly attributes overall," says Rossolo. However, LEED is working on including life-cycle assessment in future versions of its rating system.

Peter Casals, manager of membership and government relations for the Lumbermen's Association of Texas, says he wants to see how the upcoming changes in LEED pan out before he decides which rating system he prefers.
"I think it's too early to say one system is better than the other," he says. "I think that, as far as LEED, they are going to be making a lot of changes in the near future, and they are looking at a lot of things that will make them more flexible."