

US Green Building Council (USGBC) Expands LEED Recognition of Certified Wood

Decision rewards the use of wood from more sustainable sources

Washington, DC (April 8, 2016) ... This week, the US Green Building Council (USGBC) announced a new Alternate Compliance Path (ACP) credit intended to rid buildings of illegally sourced wood. Applicable to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) v4 and LEED 2009, the credit recognizes a more inclusive set of forest certification systems—including the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), American Tree Farm System (ATFS), Canadian Standards Association (CSA), and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)—in addition to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

“This announcement is great news for architects, engineers and anyone involved in the design of buildings, because it allows more wood products from sustainable sources to qualify for credit under LEED,” said Jennifer Cover, PE, Executive Director of WoodWorks. “Wood’s green building credentials include (among others) renewability, low embodied energy and a light carbon footprint, and this new credit will reward environmentally-conscious designers who want to use more wood.

“It’s also good news at a societal level. By recognizing wood from a broader range of responsible sources, the credit will contribute to stronger markets for wood products—which encourage landowners not only to invest in forest health but to keep lands forested even though greater profit can often be made by converting them to other uses.”

Wood is one of the few building materials with third-party certification programs in place demonstrating that products being sold have come from a responsibly managed resource. As of January 2016, more than 500 million acresⁱ of forest in the U.S. and Canada were certified under one of the four internationally recognized programs used in North America: SFI, ATFS, CSA or FSC. This represents approximately half of the world’s certified forests.

For more information:

- [USGBC Announcement](#)
- [Explanation of the new pilot credit](#)
- [The Impact of Wood Use on North American Forests](#), reThink Wood CEU published in *Architectural Record*

ⁱ www.sfiprogram.org, www.pefc.org, www.fsc.org, www.forestfoundation.org