



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maine Executive Order Puts Forest Certification on Equal Footing

WASHINGTON, DC – Maine Governor Paul LePage signed an [executive order](#) today directing that “any new or expanded state buildings shall incorporate ‘Green Building’ standards that give certification credits equally to forest products grown, manufactured, and certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard, Forest Stewardship Council, American Tree Farm System, and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification systems.”

“This policy is great news for North American communities and shows that the Governor and people of Maine are true leaders by being the first jurisdiction in North America to take this important position,” said Kathy Abusow, president and CEO of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative[®] Inc. (SFI Inc.) “Inclusive and leading programs such as ANSI/GBI 01-2010: Green Building Assessment Protocol for Commercial Buildings and the ANSI/ICC 700-2008: National Green Building Standard for residential construction would meet the requirements set out for state construction in Maine. However, green building rating tools like the US Green Building Council’s LEED rating tools that do not recognize forest certification equally would not meet the requirements of this executive order, in our opinion.”

The Maine Executive Order comes after [100 Members of Congress](#) and Governors, and over [6,000 individuals](#) around the world, encouraged the USGBC to reward wood from North American forests by equally recognizing SFI, ATFS, CSA, PEFC and FSC in their LEED rating system. Currently, the LEED rating tool fails to recognize nearly three-quarters of North America's certified forests, often leaving builders to give preference to FSC wood offshore over SFI certified wood in North America. Maine’s forest-products industry has an enormous impact on the state’s economy. It directly and indirectly supports 55,000 jobs, annually creates more than \$3 billion in earning and contributes \$4.3 billion annually to Maine gross domestic product.

In a [news release](#) announcing the new executive order, Governor LePage stated “We believe that by supporting the full range of forest certification programs, we are advancing Maine’s forest industry and the interests of our forest landowners in local, national, and global competition for market share... We are also protecting our valuable natural resources and traditional outdoor heritage.” More than seven million acres/ 2.8 million hectares are certified to the SFI Standard in Maine.

Maine’s announcement is one of a recent string of decisions by US agencies and organizations that reinforce SFI’s growing recognition and an increasing trend to recognize the value of all forest certification programs equally. Recently the US Departments of Agriculture and Education, and the International Green Construction Code (IgCC) have all recognized SFI and other credible certification standards.

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“With a 2012 version of LEED currently undergoing development, these recent announcements provide a timely and powerful incentive for the USGBC to recognize all forest certification standards equally,” said Abusow.

The USGBC in June released Pilot Credit 43 which recognizes all forest certification standards but is limited to non-structural materials and is only a pilot. Builders, architects and others who appreciate the value of recognizing multiple forest certification standards are encouraged to post comments about Pilot Credit 43 on the [LEED user site](#).

“This executive order supports Maine’s environmental, social and economic goals and values,” said SIC Coordinator Pat Sirois. The Maine SFI Implementation Committee (SIC), comprising SFI Program Participants and community interests, has played a key role in the growth and recognition of certification in the state.

The Maine SIC is one of 37 community-based committees that engage in important initiatives such as logger training, landowner outreach and conservation and community projects. Government officials are strongly represented on SICs, as well as on SFI’s Board of Directors and External Review Panel. More information about SFI’s collaboration with government agencies can be found [online](#).

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About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. is an independent non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. Across North America, more than 195 million acres/79 million hectares/ are certified to the SFI forest management standard, making it the largest single forest standard in the world. SFI chain-of-custody certification tells buyers the percentage of fiber from certified forests, certified sourcing and/or post-consumer recycled content. The SFI program’s unique fiber sourcing requirements promote responsible forest management on all suppliers’ lands. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally.