



April 19, 2010

Mr. Rick Fedrizzi
U.S. Green Building Council
2101 L Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20037
United States

Dear Mr. Fedrizzi:

This letter is a request from the Canadian Institute of Forestry – Institut forestier du Canada (CIF/IFC) to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to recognize all certified legal and sustainable wood from Canada, and the benefits of using wood in general, in the LEED green building system. Forest practitioners know the importance of being environmentally responsible, not only in how we manage our natural resources with current and future generations in mind, but also in their manufacture and ultimate end use.

To provide independent verification that the resources are being managed sustainably, most of the Canadian forest industry has undertaken to be certified under one of the three internationally recognized forest certification systems (Canadian Standards Association, the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative); this is in addition to adhering to existing and effective government policy, regulation and guidelines relating to sustainable forest management. As you are aware, forest management certification is a market-based voluntary initiative where forestry organizations have their forest management planning and practices independently certified against a sustainable forest management standard. They do this, in addition to meeting the strict regulatory requirements established by provincial/territorial and federal governments. As of 2010, over 149 million hectares of Canadian forests have been certified to one or more of these three standards.

Even though Canada has over 40% of the certified land globally, only 10% of the world's forests are certified. Yet private and some government agencies are still splitting hairs over specific aspects of forest management certification systems. In doing this, the focus on the overall goal of sustainable management is lost. Each standard has a different background and assesses planning and practices in a slightly different way. However, the end result of sustainably managed forests is the same, which leads us to the issue at hand.

For many years, there has been a heated debate regarding the LEED certified wood credit. Currently this credit recognizes only the forest products coming from areas certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. The Forest Stewardship Council is a well recognized standard for sustainable forest management. However, it is only one of several that provide the means to assess sustainable forest management. The Canadian Standards Association and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative programs also provide assurances that forest products come from sustainably managed forests. All three standards are applied side by side across Canada's landscape, and increasingly, multiple standards are applied on the same forest areas.

It concerns the CIF/IFC that non-forestry organizations such as USGBC are developing independent criteria/benchmarks to assess forest products as coming from sustainably managed forests. The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers and the international community, through mechanisms such as the Montreal and Pan European Processes, have already established criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. It is these widely accepted,

international criteria that the Canadian Standards Association and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative are built on. The work has been done, and is continually being reviewed. Our organization is available, if requested, to provide background information relating to this comprehensive work, and to help better guide the decisions that are being made by USGBC relating to recognizing sustainable forestry practices.

In addition to the certified wood credit controversy it is important to note another aspect of green building. Not only can the environmental "footprint" of a building be reduced by being more energy efficient through lighting and heating, but also by taking a life cycle approach to the entire design of the building and the building materials used. It is here that wood makes many positive contributions that as yet are not recognized in the LEED rating system. Wood is renewable and from sustainable sources, has acoustical properties, is warm and appealing, helps fight climate change by storing carbon, and requires less energy in fabrication when compared to other building materials.

As professionals it is our responsibility to manage and use resources wisely and in a sustainable way. We urge the USGBC to recognize all certified legal and sustainable wood from Canada, and the benefits of using wood in general, in the LEED green building system. In doing so you will be giving due recognition to the contribution of all certification programs towards sustainability, expanding the use of certified wood, and encouraging the other 90% of the world to manage their resources sustainably.

Yours truly,



Anne LeBrun Ruff, RPF
President



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