



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Robert F. McDonnell
Governor

July 2, 2010

Mr. Richard Fedrizzi, President
U. S. Green Building Council
2101 L Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Mr. Fedrizzi:

The Commonwealth of Virginia is very proud of its forests and its forest products industry. Our forests generate \$27.5 billion of economic benefit annually and are the source of employment for 144,000 forestry-related jobs. Although there are 15.7 million acres of beautiful forested land here in Virginia, very few of those acres are certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) program. That is why I am so concerned about the U. S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) green building certification program and benchmarks that maintain a strong bias towards FSC certification.

I strongly support green building practices and efforts to promote the use of energy efficient construction, but the USGBC's "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED) green building rating system discriminates against most Virginia forest products. Besides FSC, there are other credible, independently audited certification programs used across far more acres in the Commonwealth, such as the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Recognizing all certification systems will enable USGBC to achieve its goal of promoting sustainability in a manner that recognizes the importance of Virginia's existing forest products industry and the tens of thousands of jobs that are dependent on its survival. Failure to recognize Virginia's well-managed forests in favor of concrete and steel is neither environmentally nor economically sound and will serve only to encourage the importation of wood products from our foreign competitors.

I respectfully request that USGBC re-evaluate the forest certification program as quickly as possible and accept all credible forest management certification systems under LEED standards. Doing so will help to ensure strong markets for our local forest products and will go a long way toward preserving the viability of one of our greatest renewable resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert F. McDonnell".

Robert F. McDonnell