



# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

February 16, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Fedrizzi:

I am again writing to express the state of Minnesota's continuing concerns with the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) green building certification program and the Forest Certification Benchmarks which maintain a bias towards Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.

FSC is clearly a significant certifier of forest management practices and forest products. However, there are other credible, independent forest management certification programs, particularly the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). Recognizing these certification systems will enable USGBC to achieve its goal of promoting sustainability in an equitable manner.

Allowing credit for only FSC wood will disproportionately impact the ability of specific sectors of Minnesota's forest products industry to participate in the LEED-certified building industry. FSC will not certify wood produced on federal lands, and FSC certification is prohibitively expensive for small private landowners. Recognizing only FSC-certified wood in the LEED benchmarks will result in discrimination against wood products derived from well-managed lands in green building projects. The USGBC should fairly assess and include all credible forest certification programs, including SFI and ATFS systems.

More than 1,500 Minnesota families have demonstrated their commitment to sound forest management through ATFS certification. Today, more than 6

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million acres of Minnesota forest lands are certified under both the FSC and the SFI program, making Minnesota the leader in certified acres in the United States. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources maintains the largest single FSC forest management certificate in the country. Our state is clearly committed to sustainable forest management on public and private lands.

I urge you to quickly make a board decision to recognize well-managed wood from Minnesota and all credible forest certification programs. In doing so, USGBC can join other government agencies and green building rating programs in recognizing wood as an environmentally friendly building material.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Pawlenty', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tim Pawlenty  
Governor