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**Committee On Appropriations**  
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August 11, 2010

Mr. Rick Fedrizzi, President and CEO  
US Green Building Council  
2101 L Street NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Mr. Fedrizzi

As a member who represents a district with many small woodlot owners, I am writing to express concern over the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.

While I appreciate the efforts of the USGBC to promote energy efficiency and environmental conservation, I am very concerned that the LEED rating system's wood credit does not recognize two of the largest sustainable forest certification programs in the United States – the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) – and recognizes only Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood.

Over 84 million acres of forests in the United States are certified to SFI or ATFS, almost three times the amount of forests certified to FSC nationally. If the LEED rating system maintains the status quo and does not recognize SFI or ATFS, many builders seeking LEED certification would be discouraged to use third-party certified SFI and ATFS products grown here in the United States. Furthermore, by requiring wood to have third party certification to receive a credit and not forcing that requirement on steel and concrete, the USGBC discourages the overall use of a product that uses less energy and produces less pollution in its manufacturing.

I understand that the LEED rating system has proposed draft benchmarks to evaluate forest certification programs, but I am concerned that they do not offer a clear and simple way to give credit for all of the major third-party forest certification systems operating in the United States. Broadening the number of eligible certification programs could stimulate the market for American produced forest products and the communities and jobs that depend on both.

I urge you and your organization to expedite your review of forest management certification systems and to accept all credible forest management certification systems for qualification under the LEED rating system. Doing so will help ensure strong markets for domestic lumber producers and our forest landowners, which is vital to the future of our forests and our forest industry workers.

Sincerely,

  
Jack Kingston  
Member of Congress