



P O Box 819
Macon, GA 31202-0819
P 478-751-3500
F 478-751-3465

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March 15, 2010

Mr. Richard Fedrizzi
President and CEO
US Green Building Council
2101 L St. NW, Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Fedrizzi:

The Georgia Forestry Commission's vision is to ensure that Georgia maintains healthy sustainable forests providing clean air, clean water, and abundant forest products for generations. An extensive review and report of our forestlands completed by the Georgia Forestry Commission and a diverse group of stakeholders found that our forestlands are being sustainably managed.

I am concerned that the US Green Building Council (USGBC) draft benchmarks to assess forest certification standards in its LEED green building rating system appear to favor only FSC certification. The USGBC should include a fair assessment of all credible forest certification programs as well as wood from well-managed forests.

Georgia has over 24 million acres of forestland of which 92% is privately owned. We have a strong forest industry that annually contributes over \$28 billion of economic impact to our state. We are extremely proud of the environmentally sound practices utilized by our landowners and our forest industry. If the USGBC maintains the current restrictive language that favors only FSC certification, very few acres of Georgia's forestland will qualify.

I urge you to make a board decision to adopt a set of benchmarks to recognize well managed wood from our state as well as all credible forest certification programs including SFI, ATFS, and FSC. In doing so, USGBC can join other government agencies and green building rating programs in their recognition of wood as an environmentally friendly building material and in their recognition of all credible forest certification standards.

Sincerely,

Robert Farris
State Forester