



Lumbermen's Association of Texas

*The Premier Organization of
Quality Building Material Suppliers in Texas & Louisiana*

POSITION PAPER

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THE ISSUE:

State governments legislating LEED as the exclusive green building rating system unintentionally harm their wood construction industry.

BACKGROUND:

State governments have sought a more active role in promoting more energy-efficient and “green” methods for constructing public facilities. Many states, including Texas, are considering legislation that requires local governments to meet specific design and construction standards using certain green building rating systems, such as the U.S. Green Building Council’s (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or the Green Building Initiative’s Green Globes, currently two of the more commonly used systems in the evolving green building marketplace.

Unlike Green Globes, however, LEED discriminates against the two largest sustainable forestry programs in the United States, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). In fact, LEED only recognizes timber certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which comprises of less than 1/6 of certified forest in North America. Groups have criticized USGBC for developing LEED outside a consensus process using the generally accepted criteria for developing consensus standards set out by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

By solely referencing the LEED rating system in legislation and excluding other effective, credible systems that contribute to the same goal, government unintentionally puts renewable wood products at a severe disadvantage in the marketplace. While LAT supports green building practices that promote the construction of high-performance, energy-efficient buildings, legislation that requires the use of exclusively the LEED rating system, in practice, harms Texas industries that use area wood products, one of the most “green” and renewable materials in existence.

Acres of Certified Wood in North America (in millions)

Canadian Standards Association (CSA)	179.3	Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)	131.6
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)	56.8*	American Tree Farm System (ATFS)	24.4

(* Only timber LEED recognizes)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

LAT along with others in the forest products industry support energy efficient and environmentally friendly construction. However, until the several inherent flaws in LEED are fixed, we strongly urge the Texas Legislature to amend its bills to specifically include other credible and internationally recognized green building rating systems, in particular Green Globes, to meet its goals in promoting high-performance and sustainable design and construction for public buildings.

RELEVANT BILLS IN 80TH SESSION:

- HB 999** Adoption of energy efficiency and conservation standards for the design, construction, and renovation of public school instructional facilities.
- HB 1824** Guaranteed level of state and local funds under the existing debt allotment for school districts that comply with green building guidelines.
- SB 445** Design and construction standards for newly constructed state buildings.
- SB 899** Design and construction standards for newly constructed or renovated state buildings, public school facilities, and higher education facilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Green Globes: www.greenglobes.com/design/homeca.asp

LEED vs. Green Globes: www.beconstructive.com/pdf/factsheet1.pdf