

## Support Local Jobs & Millions of Family Forest Owners who Supply our Wood Products

### ***Change Federal Policy to Support Wood in US Green Building***

**Wood is good for the environment, rural jobs, and the economy.** Wood products are environmentally friendly building materials, especially when compared to alternatives like concrete and steel. Wood helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and stores carbon. The wood products industry supports more than 331,000 family-wage jobs in rural communities across the U.S.

**The federal government has policies that discourage the use of wood in building construction.** Several agencies have policies that require U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.

**LEED does not encourage builders to use wood products** over other, less environmentally friendly materials like steel and concrete. If a builder does decide to use wood products, they can get a "certified wood credit" for using wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council but not for wood from American Tree Farm System® or Sustainable Forestry Initiative certified forests. Most certified forests in the U.S. are certified by ATFS and SFI. Other LEED credits, such as the "local sourcing" credit, do not distinguish between environmentally preferable products. Given that wood products tend not to be produced locally to construction sites, this local credit tends to favor products like steel and concrete which are made near cities and population centers.

**The government is one of the largest supporters of LEED.** Government-owned or occupied LEED buildings make up almost one-third of all LEED projects. Two of the largest federal builders, the General Services Administration and the Department of Defense both have LEED preference policies.

**Family forest owners need markets for their sustainably grown wood products.** Forests serve as a line of defense in the protection of clean water and air, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Shutting family forest owners—who own the majority of the nation's private forests and supply most of the nation's timber—out of the rapidly expanding green construction markets makes it harder for families to keep their land and provide the benefits all Americans need and value. And this market is growing fast—the U.S. green building market value is projected to balloon from \$7.1 billion now to \$173 billion by 2015.

**There are other options.** Two LEED alternatives, the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes rating system and the National Association of Home Builders' National Green Building Standard, encourage the use of wood products. The federal government should allow all credible options that encourage "building green," rather than pick winners and losers.

**We need help from Congress.** We have tried to work with USGBC to no avail and 100 political leaders have weighed in, too.

**Please urge the federal agencies, especially DOD and GSA, to level the playing field and allow use of other green building rating systems that encourage the use of wood products.**



American Forest Foundation

*The American Forest Foundation is a nonprofit conservation organization that gives people the tools they need to be effective stewards of America's natural heritage. We work with educators, family woodland owners, and partners in every state to keep our forests healthy and our children well-prepared for the future they will inherit.*