



**FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL  
UNITED STATES**

*The mark of responsible forestry*  
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## **LEED V4 & FSC: LEADERSHIP STANDARDS**

### **LEED IS TRANSFORMING THE FOREST PRODUCTS MARKETPLACE.**

The US Green Building Council's LEED program has been one of the most significant drivers of forest conservation in history, improving management on 100 million acres in the US and Canada through Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. Consider these facts:

- **More than 4,500 businesses and 160 million acres of forest in the US and Canada** are certified to FSC standards today, representing more than a million jobs and tens of billions of dollars of economic activity.
- **Companies large and small are committed to FSC** because they know their customers value environmental and social responsibility. These companies include consumer products giants like Kimberly Clark, The Home Depot, Hewlett-Packard, Starbucks and Office Depot and lumberyards like 84 Lumber, Golden State Lumber, Hayward Lumber, Channel Lumber, Ashby Lumber, and Beronio Lumber. This commitment means that many jobs are tied to the trade in FSC-certified products.
- **FSC-certified land managers put people to work in the forest.** These include more than 40,000 American family forest owners, along with Potlatch, Forestland Group, Lyme Timber, New Page, Roy O. Martin, Collins Companies, Westervelt, Columbia Forest Products, and the states of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio, Maine, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, New York, Washington, and Maryland.
- **More than 1/3 of FSC's total global acreage is in the US and Canada.** No other region in the world is more competitive in responsibly sourced FSC-certified forest products than North America.

### **USGBC MEMBERS: KEEP STRONG INCENTIVES FOR FSC IN LEED V4!**

**MR Credit: Building Product Disclosure and Optimization – Sourcing of Raw Materials** maintains FSC as the only forest certification system recognized in the fifth draft of LEED v4. However, this credit needs further improvement to retain strong incentives for FSC in LEED, and for responsible sourcing of raw materials more generally.

**Option 1** rewards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting on products, yet it is unclear how this will be effective in fulfilling the credit's intent: *“To encourage the use of products and materials for which life cycle information is available and that have environmentally, economically, and socially preferable life cycle impacts. To reward project teams for selecting products verified to have*

*been extracted or sourced in a responsible manner."* The CSR reporting frameworks referenced do not require complete life cycle information (which is addressed elsewhere in LEED v4, in a credit rewarding Environmental Product Declarations – EPDs) and do not verify that products have been extracted or sourced responsibly.

**Option 2** focuses on "Leadership Extraction Practices," which include FSC certification for forest products. Just as post-consumer recycled content has long been weighted more heavily than pre-consumer, FSC-certified products should be weighted more heavily than materials that lack third-party certification to a leadership performance standard and a fully audited chain-of-custody. These products are simply not on a level playing field.

Much has been made about a small phrase in LEED v4: *"FSC or USGBC-approved equivalent."*

FSC is a leadership standard, meaning any equivalent should:

- Be a high performance standard driving market transformation well beyond status quo practices.
- Have a diverse, open membership and democratic governance.
- Incorporate the precautionary approach.
- Maintain and enhance ecosystems and protect biodiversity.
- Protect the rights of communities and indigenous people.
- Have standards requiring on-the-ground performance, as opposed to the programs and aspirational objectives that industry-dominated standards tend to favor.

20 years ago, FSC was created to prove that what's good for the forest is good for business. As a result, we now know that we don't need to trade environmental protection for economic development.

Using FSC-certified products in LEED creates jobs, right here at home. And it ensures we leave future generations a legacy of living forests.

**Protect American jobs, communities and our forests. Urge USGBC to keep strong incentives for FSC-certified products in LEED v4.**

**For more information, visit [www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org).**

**The fifth public comments period for LEED v4 is open until December 10, 2012. Public comments can be submitted through the USGBC credit library at [new.usgbc.org/credits](http://new.usgbc.org/credits).**