July 15, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Fedrizzi:

As members who are both active on forestry issues and represent districts with many small woodlot owners, we are writing to express our concern over the United States Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.

While we appreciate the efforts of the USGBC to promote energy efficiency and environmental conservation, we are 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 is discouraging the overall use of a product that uses less energy and produces less pollution in its manufacturing.

We understand that the LEED rating system has proposed draft benchmarks to evaluate forest certification programs, but we are 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.

We 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,

KURT SCHRADER  
Member of Congress

BOB GOODLATTE  
Member of Congress

JAMES OBERSTAR  
Member of Congress

NORM DICKS  
Member of Congress

MIKE MICHAUD  
Member of Congress

WALTER JONES  
Member of Congress

DAVID OBEY  
Member of Congress

BRAD ELLSWORTH  
Member of Congress

JO BONNER  
Member of Congress

STEPHANIE HERSETHER SANDLIN  
Member of Congress

GREG WALDEN  
Member of Congress

JOHN SPRATT  
Member of Congress

FRANK LUCAS  
Member of Congress

DON YOUNG  
Member of Congress
STEVE SCALISE  
Member of Congress

BENNIE THOMPSON  
Member of Congress

WILLIAM OWENS  
Member of Congress

ROBERT WITTMAN  
Member of Congress

SANFORD BISHOP  
Member of Congress

ROSCOE BARTLETT  
Member of Congress

GLENN THOMPSON  
Member of Congress

TRAVIS CHILDERS  
Member of Congress

BRIAN BAIRD  
Member of Congress

WALLY HERGER  
Member of Congress

DENNIS REHBERG  
Member of Congress

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress

TOM MCCLINTOCK  
Member of Congress

RODNEY ALEXANDER  
Member of Congress
DAN BOREN
Member of Congress

CHARLES BOUSTANY
Member of Congress

MARSHA BLACKBURN
Member of Congress

SCOTT MURPHY
Member of Congress

JOHN SULLIVAN
Member of Congress

JOHN SALAZAR
Member of Congress

HEATH SHULER
Member of Congress

TOM COLE
Member of Congress

LARRY KISSELL
Member of Congress

PETER WELCH
Member of Congress

MIKE ROSS
Member of Congress

BART STUPAK
Member of Congress

RICK BOUCHER
Member of Congress

JOANN EMERSON
Member of Congress
ARTUR DAVIS  
Member of Congress

DOC HASTINGS  
Member of Congress

PARKER GRIFFITH  
Member of Congress

DAVID REICHERT  
Member of Congress

BILL SHUSTER  
Member of Congress

MIKE ROGERS  
Member of Congress

MICHAEL ARCURI  
Member of Congress

GEOFF DAVIS  
Member of Congress

G.K. BUTTERFIELD  
Member of Congress