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AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS AND BUILDING EXPERTS SPEAK OUT AGAINST GSA GREEN BUILDING REVIEW

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 26, 2012) – A group of diverse organizations with interests in energy-efficient buildings and construction spoke out yesterday at a U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) listening session on the agency's review of green building rating systems.

Under the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA), GSA is required to evaluate green building certification systems every five years to identify a system "deem(ed) to be most likely to encourage a comprehensive and environmentally sound approach to certification of green buildings." For 2012, GSA commissioned Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to prepare a [Green Building Certification System Review](#), and yesterday's listening session was held to gather input from the public and key stakeholders, such as the manufacturers of energy efficient building products.

Several organizations emphasized the need for greater transparency and openness in the development process of green building standards to ensure they meet the federal government's consensus requirements.

"GSA should endorse only green building certification systems that are developed through fully open, balanced, consensus-based processes," said Richard Doyle, president and CEO of the Vinyl Institute. "We believe the process for the development of LEED is flawed: the actual credit development phase is not open, transparent, or available for participation to all interested stakeholders. Without the changes that are needed to give LEED more daylight, GSA should not endorse LEED as part of its recommended federal green building certification system."

"Any guideline, standard or certification system adopted by the federal government must be developed through a recognized consensus-based process. Closed-door approaches to the development of whole building certification systems introduce and magnify scientific shortcomings," said Justin Koscher, vice president of Public Policy at the Center for Environmental Innovation in Roofing. "With respect to the federal government's building portfolio, consensus-based processes protect the public interest and ensure taxpayer dollars are spent in the most efficient manner."

"We believe that USGBC needs to materially improve its decision-making process to avoid closed-door decisions based on narrow interests in order for LEED to qualify as a consensus and transparent voluntary standard worthy of GSA recommendation," said William Hall of the Resilient Floor Covering Institute. "GSA has a critical role in ensuring that any green building rating system adopted for use by the federal government meets the cornerstones of fundamental fairness and due process."

There was also a strong focus at the listening session on the need to prevent a federal government monopoly of one green building rating system.

"The danger in endorsing LEED as the single acceptable green building rating system for the federal government is it can lead to the USGBC's further monopolization in these types of programs. GSA must foster competition and give full consideration to other rating systems such as the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes program, which is an ANSI accredited standard," said Mark Collatz, director of Government Relations with the Adhesive and Sealant Council.

“We believe that the government should support the use of true consensus standards for any public green building initiative. NAHB strongly believes that no one private system should be favored. The recent GSA review only examined three rating systems – two of which are not certified as consensus based standards, and none of which are residential standards,” said Billie Kaumaya, federal legislative director at National Association of Home Builders.

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