



Issue Brief

The American Institute of Architects • Government Advocacy • Current Issue Position and Analysis

Green Rating Systems

Green Building Provisions

Key Points:

- *Rating systems ensure a certain degree of energy efficiency is met and promote further conservation.*
- *Currently, over 5% of non-residential building construction is seeking certification from green rating systems.*
- *13 states have passed legislation that uses or plan to use green rating systems as a means to evaluate green buildings.*
- *At least 28 states have pending legislation that uses green rating systems to evaluate green buildings.*
- *Green buildings can increase office productivity by 2-16%.¹*
- *By using green technologies, the Federal government's building-related energy costs have been reduced by 23% per square foot in the past 22 years – which has saved taxpayers \$1.4 billion.¹*

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AIA Position

The AIA supports the transparent, consensus-based development of green building rating systems and standards that incorporate LCA (life-cycle assessments), acknowledge and address regional and bio-climactic differences as well as building type differences, and require measurable reductions in GHG emissions attributable to the built environment.

Action Sought

The AIA urges state and local governments to adopt green rating systems as standards for public buildings and as a means of evaluating green buildings in the private sector.

Explanation and Justification

The benefits of high-performance, or “green,” buildings are many – reduced impact on the environment, increased occupant health and productivity, reduced operational costs, improved indoor air quality, and so on. Green rating systems, or standards are the easiest and most cost effective way to achieve energy efficiency in buildings. The ratings serve as a checklist to ensure that a building or project actually meets energy reduction and environmental protection goals.

Rating systems encourage and promote green design. As many existing programs offer multiple levels of certification, the design/building community is encouraged to continually strive for new sustainable goals. Governments need to institutionalize these standards to not only reap the benefits of high-performance technology, but to incentivize building green. By offering a system with which to compare buildings, standards are developed and quality is assured.

Requirements:

The AIA believes that any rating system should be developed and renewed through a consensus-based process with the participation of all interested parties and should require documentation to demonstrate compliance, independent third party validation and the utilization of life cycle assessment data as the basis for design and construction decision making.

Rating systems should also promote and require measurable goals with regards to:

- site selection
- water efficiency
- energy efficiency
- the use of renewable energy sources
- the reduction of non-renewable natural resources
- the reduction and recycling of waste
- improved indoor air quality
- natural day-lighting
- the use of low emission materials
- innovative design
- the address of environmental impacts (acid rain, water pollution, etc.)
- the address of national, regional and bio-climactic differences
- the reduction and eventual elimination of toxic elements
- the reduction of CO2
- the use of life cycle assessment data as the basis for design and construction decision making.

For more information contact the State and Local Affairs team at 202-626-7507 or govaffs@aia.org.

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¹ Building Momentum. National Trends and Prospects for High-Performance Green Buildings. Based on the April 2002 Green Building Roundtable and Prepared for the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. US. Green Building Council.