Army to Congress: LEED Doesn't Cost More

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The Army is still going for Gold and Platinum despite recent legislation calling a halt to LEED spending.

The federal government has been one of the biggest supporters of LEED certification in the last few years, with the General Services Administration (GSA) requiring basic LEED certification for all federal buildings starting in 2003 and then upping that requirement to LEED Gold in 2010.

The military has been on the cutting edge of green building from the beginning. The Navy adopted sustainable design principles before LEED even existed, as we reported way back in 1998. The Army embraced LEED in 2006 and recently began the much more radical work of moving all its installations to net-zero energy, water, and waste. As Katherine Hammack, assistant secretary of the Army for installations, energy, and the environment, put it to EBN earlier this year, " Energy security is mission critical."

We feared that might all change when we saw that the most recent military appropriations legislation requires explicit justification for any spending on LEED above the Silver level. What's worse, this decision pretends to be about money but appears to have been made over certified wood credits. (Watch this space for in-depth coverage of the "wood wars" in coming weeks.)

Hammack is having none of it. In a call with reporters yesterday, she reiterated the Army's commitment to net-zero and LEED and gave an update about some of the progress that's already been made. "We're finding it does not cost more to design and construct to LEED" standards, Hammack said.

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