



Governor's Action Defies Logic and Economics

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Last Friday, I went to work just like any other day at my firm, Fore Solutions, here in Portland, Maine. I fired up my computer, but instead of the normal updates on projects and industry newsletters, I was greeted with eye-popping subject lines. "Maine bans LEED!" was just one example. Thinking that can't be right, I opened a few to find that Maine Governor Paul LePage issued an [Executive Order](#) banning LEED on state capital projects to satisfy out of state industry interests. Just like that, Maine goes from a leader to a laggard.

Forcing the professionals who design and build new state buildings to stop using the most widely used green building rating system (LEED) is not in the voter's interests. Not only will this be damaging to Maine's architects, engineers and contractors who are leaders in the green building world, but it is also an embarrassment for the people of this state, for whom conservatism means environmental conservation as much as fiscal. And bottom line, the economics don't make sense either. So I must ask, why is the Governor trying to throw an important piece of our economic engine in reverse?



What Governor LePage has failed to recognize is the transformational role that LEED certified capital projects have played in catalyzing building activity throughout our state. As a state we rank 12th in the nation for LEED certified green building space on a *per capita* basis. That's 1.6 million square feet, much of which would not have happened if LEED weren't the market standard for communicating green building success. I was a founding board member of the Maine chapter of USGBC, and I can tell you that **Mainers can do more**. This decision leaves a community of 67 USGBC member companies in the state who contribute more than \$5 billion annually to our state's economy out in the cold.

But this executive order creates another barrier to achieving all of Maine's potential. It takes away one of the most effective tools that the state has to achieve better buildings that are cheaper to operate and therefore easier on Mainers' wallets and healthier places to live and work.

Building green is not red or blue, left or right. As a New Englander, building green appears to me to be just good common sense. It's doing more with less, and increasing quality, value and performance... and we're saving energy, water and money, too. Given that green building is a "bright spot" in an otherwise tough economy (and reports by [McGraw Hill](#) and many others will back me up) - and if we care about the future of the Great State of Maine - why would we disallow the world's most well-known, respected, and continuously improving green building rating system and certification program?

If this is motivated by the unsubstantiated fears of wood industry interests (as it appears to read), let me spell it out: I specify wood from Maine that has not been specifically labeled as "sustainably harvested" in my LEED projects, and earn credit for it because it is local. I also specify some sustainably harvested wood from Maine and elsewhere, but when it's local, it *counts twice!*

As a member of the Maine building community - and someone who cares deeply about green building practices - banning LEED in Maine state projects simply makes no sense. I urge everyone who has a stake in a greener, brighter, more sustainable Maine to reach out to the Governor and make sure he understands that this Executive Order is not the answer to industry woes, but a step backwards in the march toward better buildings for the state of Maine.

 **Gunnar Hubbard** 

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