



# An Integrated Approach to Solving Interconnected Challenges

Published on 14 Jun 2011 | Written by **Brendan Owens** | Posted in [LEED](#)

The Institute of Medicine's recently released [report](#) highlights the critical interrelationships that exist as our society struggles with the global and local impacts of climate change. While the report focuses specifically on the potentially negative human health impacts associated with efforts to lower carbon emissions from the built environment, we are confident that the report authors understand that interconnected problems cannot be solved in isolation of one and other. This report calls for increased focus on direct human health impacts of new technologies and strategies being employed in response to the climate change crisis our world faces. It is not acceptable to solve one set of problems by creating another. Rather, an integrated approach to these (and other) interconnected challenges needs to be employed to achieve solutions that solve problems in a systematic way. The LEED green building rating system does this by prioritizing strategies and solutions that help to mitigate climate change while heightening human health: By promoting a whole-building approach to sustainability that takes into account all areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Through its uptake, LEED has started a global conversation focused on the cumulative impact of buildings on environmental and human health. High-performing, LEED-certified green buildings are not only helping to solve the critical challenges posed by climate change, they're leading to a new generation of contaminant-free buildings that protect the indoor air we breathe and minimize the risk of building-related health problems. USGBC applauds the study for continuing the dialogue on building impacts and for shedding light on the profound gaps in substantive building-related research.



**Brendan Owens**

Chief of Engineering  
U.S. Green Building Council



Member employees, USGBC staff

0 comments

[Leave a comment](#)

Leave a comment

Don't have an account? [Create one](#)

You must be signed in to leave a comment.

Email

Password

**SIGN IN**