San Francisco Announces Green Certifications in Official Property Records

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Dan Geiger, USGBC-NCC & Phil Ting, City of SF. Credit: USGBC – Northern California Chapter

San Francisco, CA. I had the pleasure of participating in an important press conference today highlighting San Francisco's continuing leadership in green building public policy.

San Francisco Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting and Department of Environment Director Melanie Nutter announced the launch of "Green Labels" at a press conference at the LEED Silver W Hotel. This first-in-the-nation program incorporates green labels– LEED, ENERGY STAR, Home Energy Rating System II (HERS), Home Energy Score (Department of Energy), and Build It Green's Green Point Rated certification for homes – into San Francisco City and County's official land records.

More than 1,000 parcels in San Francisco have earned a Green Label, and these properties cover more than 60 million square feet of commercial space. According to USGBC's new Green Building Information Gateway, San Francisco has 50 million square feet of LEED Certified space, and at least 35% of San Francisco's total commercial square-footage now has a LEED and/or ENERGYSTAR certification.

Incorporating Green Labels into San Francisco's official property records is a joint effort by the Assessor-Recorder's office, the Department of Environment and dozens of real estate leaders, architects, builders, business groups, sustainability advocates and other stakeholders.

The goal of the initiative is to encourage energy efficiency and other environmental performance improvements. Other goals include increasing investments in energy efficiency, and enhancing the market's ability to value energy and environmental performance.

San Francisco Department of Environment Director Melanie Nutter said: "over 53% of San Francisco's carbon emissions come from the buildings. To ward off the worst effects of climate change locally means we must tackle energy use in buildings. Recording Green Labels in the Assessor-Recorder database will provide the transparency needed to reveal high performance buildings and demonstrate leaders in the field. Having this benchmark documented will raise the profile both of this labeling system as well as the higher performing buildings."

"The Green Label information now maintained in our files is an important first step in the universal adoption of ecologically-sustainable building practices. Reducing the ecological impact of our built environment is a top priority for so many of us in San Francisco," says Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting.

The Assessor's rules for reassessment remain unchanged by this initiative and a Green Label by itself will not be used to increase assessed value of properties. There will also be no additional paperwork or filing requirements in order for a property's Green Label to be reflected in the Assessor-Recorder's files.

USGBC applauds this program and lends its full support. As Jason Hartke, USGBC vice-president for national policy said: "San Francisco is taking a significant and historic step forward to advance green building. This innovative effort will spur important economic and environmental benefits to the city, ultimately helping accelerate the transition to a more efficient, high performing built environment."

And I said at the press conference – San Francisco has another green building first under our belt: USGBC was founded here in 1993; San Francisco received the World Green Building Council's Leadership Award for Excellence in City Policy for Green Building in 2011; and now we have the first Green Label program in the country. A perfect follow-up to the "best Greenbuild ever" two weeks ago - way to

go San Francisco!

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Member employees, Chapter members

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