

Well Worth the Sleepless Nights: Fourth Public Comment Period for LEED 2012

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Earlier this week, USGBC announced a Fourth Public Comment period for LEED 2012, running from May 1 – 15. While we're not particularly looking forward to the upcoming sleepless nights required to keep things on schedule, staff is excited about other aspects of this upcoming comment period. As we engage in what we expect to be the final public comment period prior to ballot, we can take stock of the contributions of thousands of volunteers and stakeholders who are all dedicated to balancing technical advancements in the system with market ability to continue to show leadership in design, construction and operation of LEED projects.

We've known it since the beginning, but the nearly 20,000 public comments submitted to date about LEED 2012 development are positive proof that we continue to benefit from an incredibly knowledgeable and engaged stakeholder base that directly inspires the technical and market development of LEED. The input from those who have commented has been used to dramatically improve every iteration of LEED 2012 since the first public comment period and we're confident in a similar outcome this time as well.

LEED 2012 substantively changes the way LEED project teams are encouraged to - and rewarded for - action taken to protect human health, specify products that support domestic and local investment and entrepreneurial innovation and enhance overall environmental performance, all while providing return on investment opportunities for owners and operators.

From a technical perspective, LEED 2012 pushes project teams further than previous versions of LEED ever have. Continuous improvement and redefinition of leadership and innovation are in USGBC's DNA. And we need to go further. The creation of the International Green Construction Code (which includes ANSI/ASHRAE/IES/USGBC Standard 189.1 as an approved compliance option) was, in large part, based on your leadership and innovation with LEED. Through the IGCC your work on LEED serves as the foundation for current and future policy action and as the regulatory floor goes up, LEED must continue to raise the bar.

Perhaps most significant, LEED 2012 defines leadership for more market sectors across a wider range of building products and manufacturing industries. This expanded focus seeks to extend the beneficial outcomes LEED delivers up and down the supply chain. Coincident with this focus, LEED 2012 far better addresses environmental footprint issues like climate change and encourages optimization of energy and water use – all of which translate to dollars saved in operations.

LEED 2012 is also improving by design. We've always encouraged integrated design (and LEED 2012 now offers credit for it) and we've spent a significant amount of time learning the lessons you've taught us - dramatically improving how we work together internally and collaborate with our extraordinary network of volunteers. The development of the other pieces of necessary to launch LEED 2012 - including credit documentation, reference guide development, education in support of LEED users and credential holders, and improvements to our online tools and resources – is underway and the integrated development plan runs concurrent with our ongoing public comment and balloting periods.

LEED 2012 affords a unique opportunity to make improvements to the usability of the rating system by creating intuitive and flexible documentation that focuses on collecting key data points for certification, reference guide content that enables project team understanding and achievement of requirements, and education for the successful implementation of new and evolving content in LEED 2012.

Staff remains excited and feels privileged to be working through these items now. Our process of incorporating public comments in the refinement of this work throughout the summer and prior to launch has dramatically improved the rating system.

In other words, LEED 2012 is a big deal.

It is intended to change the way project teams think, integrate, plan, execute, and operate their buildings.

It seeks to pull in new markets and establish direction for parts of the building and manufacturing industries unlike ever before.

With your continued help, LEED 2012 is redefining leadership for our industry. And we should all be really proud of that.

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