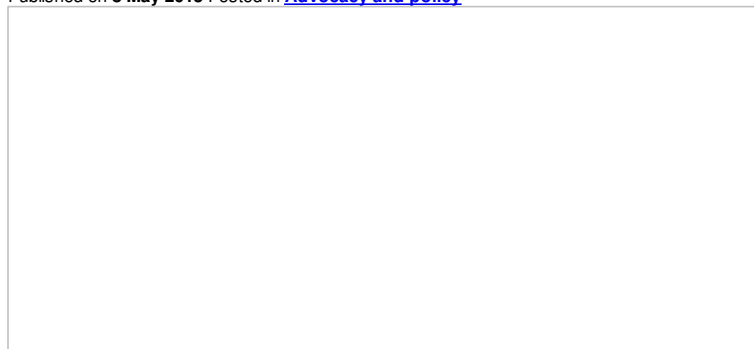


# GSA's Green Building Advisory Committee Responds "LEED is the Best Choice"

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What happens when you assemble a prestigious group of private and public building industry experts and ask, "How should the federal government build green?"

First, they will look at you a bit funny for asking an obvious question with such an obvious answer: "LEED, of course." We've heard this answer multiple times just this year.

What happens when you assemble a group of politicians and lobbyists and ask them the same question? Unfortunately, we'll have to wait to find out in the coming months.

The Green Building Advisory Committee, a who's who of building industry leaders from the public and private sector assembled by the General Services Administration, [recommended last week](#) that GSA certify federal buildings with the LEED green building certification system. The recommendation culminates a process that began in 2011 and considered more than 160 different green building programs. It also reinforces the [findings](#) of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council study from earlier this year. Private sector architects, engineers, developers, building owners and state and local government officials worked with representatives from federal agencies like the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Department of Health and Human Services on the committee.

To most in the building sector, [the conclusion is clear](#): LEED is the industry standard for high-performance green buildings. That's not to say there aren't other ways to build green, but owners and tenants demand LEED-certified buildings over and over again — for good reason. In fact, 88 out of the Fortune 100 businesses are currently using LEED.

But in Washington, D.C., the obvious can be obscured. In recent weeks, we've seen attempts by trade associations from the chemical industry to add a "poison pill" amendment to the nearly universally supported, bipartisan energy efficiency legislation in the Senate. That amendment would force the GSA to stop using LEED entirely, despite its [track record](#) of [success](#).

USGBC is addressing these political attacks every way we can, including running [this ad](#) in the "inside the beltway" press. We are making it clear that not just USGBC, but the entire green building industry is watching.

USGBC is a nonprofit focused on creating the best green building system in existence, not on lobbying Congress. It will take practitioners from companies large and small around the country fighting government intervention in the rapidly growing green building industry to keep the tremendous lobbying clout of Big Chemical from succeeding. Stay tuned to USGBC.org for more info on how to do just that.

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It will be interesting to see if the critics have any traction in their claims. In my opinion, they are afraid to change since they have so much invested in their proprietary processes. That's the real problem here... without the pressure to change for the better, the status quo will kill us... literally. I applaud the US Government, whichever entity within that may be, to take steps forward for a sustainable, and hopefully regenerative, future. Whether it be with LEED or some other green standard, at least they are recognizing the issues, and taking action towards a better tomorrow.

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