

Media Release April 19, 2016

OFIA Supports USGBC's Decision to Recognize Diversity in Certification Systems

April 19, 2016 - The Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) supports the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) decision that would expand the Council's definition of a certified source to match ASTM D7612-10. As a result of this decision, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, the Canadian Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Standard and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, as well as the Forest Stewardship Council are included in the new Alternative Compliance Path pilot credit, Legal Wood.

"OFIA has been consistent in our position that certification initiatives play a valuable role in verifying that forestry practices are balanced and sustainable," said Jamie Lim, President and CEO of the OFIA. "OFIA believes that this announcement by the USGBC is a step in the right direction. Wood as a building material is experiencing a renaissance. Architects and engineers who want their project to stand out from typical glass and concrete structures are turning to wood as the naturally striking and sustainable building material of choice."

Architectural publications are calling for "the beginning of the timber age" recognizing that "wood is taking over from steel and concrete as the architectural wonder material of the 21st century, with architects praising its sustainability, quality and speed of construction." (Dezeen Magazine, November 2015). The recent decision by the USGBC will help Ontario realize this great opportunity.

"Ontario is a global leader in forest management," concluded Ian Dunn, Forest Policy Advisor with OFIA. "Ontario has more than 32 million hectares of Crown forests. In addition to the Province's rigorous forest management program, as of January 1st, 2016 more than 26 million hectares of Crown forests were certified."

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Ontario's renewable forest products sector supports over 170,000 direct and indirect jobs in over 260 Ontario communities. Since 1943 the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) has represented forestry companies ranging from large multinational corporations to family operated businesses. The OFIA believes that by working with government to address key competitive issues, secure long term access to affordable and accessible fibre and promote the province's 21st century forest products sector, Ontario will be the number one jurisdiction in Canada for today's green and growing renewable sector