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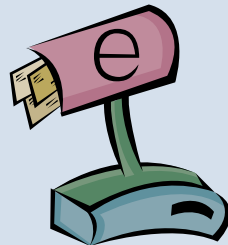
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## Readers React to Wood Issues

*We hope you had the opportunity to read the May issue of **SBC**. Gauging from the response to Ben Hershey's op-ed "Cost of Certified Wood Raises Concern," the industry is fired up about the topic.*

*Those of you who have followed the actions of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) throughout the last several years know that the organization's attempts to remedy the FSC-exclusive provisions in its LEED rating system have fallen short of satisfying the building community—including the SBC industry. In early June, USGBC announced yet another public comment period for its Forest Certification Benchmarks, a set of guidelines that if incorporated into the LEED programs, would determine which forest certification programs (SFI, CSA and ATF to name a few) qualify for LEED points. The Benchmarks have thus far been criticized for their slant toward FSC, and opponents believe that some of the language will make it difficult for SFI and other certified wood products to meet the requirements. This is USGBC's fourth comment period in two years (since August 2008) in an attempt to resolve the backlash from lumber buyers, like SBCA, and lumber product consumers who feel strongly that only allowing FSC certified wood is unfairly driving up the cost of the products they produce and use and therefore the overall cost for the consumer. With the construction market being so cost-sensitive, this essentially eliminates LEED points for the use of FSC certified wood.*

*We'd like to share some of your comments and invite you to continue sending your thoughts. Visit [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info) to read the articles in the May issue or other past issues.*

Hi Ben,

I was very impressed with your article "Cost of Certified Wood Raises Concern." We have the exact same scenario here with the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA).

Cheers and keep up the good fight!

James Bowden • Editor, Timber & Forestry News

*[Editor's Note: GBCA is not the same organization as the U.S. Green Building Council. GBCA was formed in 2002 and has developed its own green building rating system, partly based on LEED, called Green Star.]*

Dear SBC,

I just completed reading and wanted to complement you on the May issue of SBC. The opinion piece by Ben Hershey is well written and reflects the frustration felt by many of us when dealing with the forest products industry. I particularly enjoyed the article on the Sacramento Habitat home; it demonstrates that LEED certification can be achieved without an owner being forced to use FSC certified wood.

Good job!

Bill Tucker • Florida Building Material Association

Ben,

I was cleaning up my desk and decided to browse May's issue of **SBC**. I read your opinion on certification. Thank you! I hope someone that matters reads it and does something.

I'm working late tonight to clarify some details on a FSC truss project one of our customers did in November. The auditor rejected the LEED point for FSC certified wood.

Thanks you for putting in your valuable time to voice your opinion.

Respectfully,

Dennis Fahey • North Star Forest Materials

Mr. Hershey,

I just read your article in **SBC Magazine** and I have to say we share your frustration. I do hope it spurs the industry to respond to USGBC. I think by far and away the most frustrating fact is that USGBC does not hold concrete or steel, or any other building material for that matter, to the same level as it does wood. Our hope is that they begin to ask for some form of third party certification from the other building material producers and that they open their forest certification criteria.

I believe we can increase wood's share in non-residential construction with or without USGBC changing the certification criteria. However, if your efforts are successful and you do manage to spur on others in the forest industry to pressure the USGBC to change its rules on forest certification, I believe that will only help us be that much more successful for the forest products industry.

Good luck with your efforts and if there is anything we can do please let us know.

Dwight Yochim, RPF • National Director (U.S.), WoodWorks

*One reader sounded off on the article about addressing lumber quality.*

**SBC,**

I read with interest your article about lumber quality. I'm a very small component manufacturer in central Colorado and have faced these problems for the 15 years I've been in business. I long ago started buying "above grade" to acquire lumber suitable for my operation's quality standards. I experience the higher cull rate you mention for #2BTR through MSR 2100. While I used to have units of nearly perfect 2100, it is now no better than the stud grade of years past, sometimes worse.

I used to be able to pick certain mills with the knowledge that I could get consistent quality. No more. Many of today's mills I've never heard of and the old standbys no longer come through.

Despite what the producer may claim, quality today, in a word, stinks. Why do we manufacturers accept it?

At my operation's size I cannot buy carloads of lumber and sometimes not even full units. Culling means overbuying. Many times I don't have production that allows the use of the culled product in other areas. This drives my costs to the extreme.

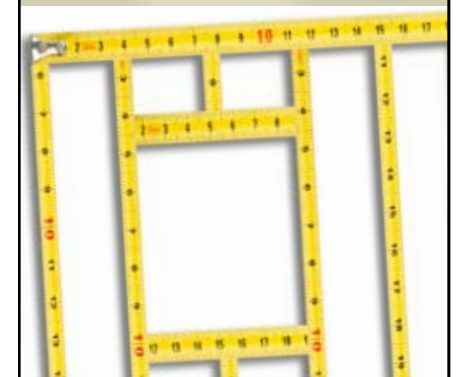
While I'm not yet ready to claim a vast conspiracy to eliminate small operations such as mine, lumber quality along with the trend to more conservative engineering requirements is making the cost of producing a quality component very difficult and quite expensive.

I would think that most quality-minded manufacturers would pay a reasonable price for the quality wood of the past if we could get it. But then, this might expose the lumber producer to their "gasoline shortage" tactics. The wood is there, sell it to us.

Thank you,

Bruce Bunker • Bunkhouse Components • Bonanza, CO

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The mission of **Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC)** is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any affiliated association (SBCA) .



6300 Enterprise Lane • Suite 200 • Madison, WI 53719  
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