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LEED 2012 becomes LEED v4

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In the wake of growing concerns in the market place over LEED 2012, the U.S. Green Building Council has announced plans to postpone the balloting for what will now be LEED v4 until June 2013. The current system, LEED 2009 will be available for the next three years, although increasing incentives will be made for project teams to move to the new version once it is ready.

This tough decision was made by the USGBC after many stakeholders expressed concern over three main areas of change from the current system:

- * The proposed changes in the rating system have frequently been described as "too much, too soon" LEED 2009 minimized technical changes and focused on the reorganization and weighting of the credit structure. This resulted in LEED 2012 credit requirement changes to be the most extensive in the LEED System's history.

- * Many were concerned about extensive changes in the Materials & Resources Category which included new approaches in selection and varied significantly between drafts. In accordance with the USGBC's highest standard for forest products and avoidance of harmful chemicals, recent attacks from the chemical and forest product industry will not weaken LEED v4 during the added review time.

- * While the system would have been ready to launch, tools and resources needed to achieve the credits wouldn't be ready for the public until late November. There was also concern about the USGBC and the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) being able to effectively coordinate certifications under the new system in such a short turn around time.

This added review period will allow the USGBC to examine and further refine major areas in the LEED v4 System:

1. The new schedule allows for "beta testing" of the new rating system to accurately assess the real time advantages and challenges of implementing the new system. They will also open the fifth public comment period, which is scheduled to run from Oct. 2 to Dec. 10, 2012 which will include feedback from the beta testing.
2. Refine the Materials and Resources Credit Category, which has been hotly debated
3. Upgrade tools such as LEED Online to be ready for new credits, traffic and submissions.
4. Re-evaluate and address areas like occupant energy reduction, more efficient envelope design, and proper building orientation.

Personally, I would like to thank the U.S. Green Building Council for making a tough decision to postpone the next LEED System, choosing quality and responsiveness over timeliness. There is an opportunity to bring stakeholders together to better this system for mutual benefit and get it right the first time. LEED has always served as a tool for market transformation in the built environment. With change, comes opposition. The USGBC values both our stakeholder's passion for market transformation and their day-to-day assessment of market realities. Postponing the LEED 2012

launch was the USGBC's direct way to let stakeholders know that they are listening and responding to their concerns.

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