September 16, 2019

The Honorable Rick Perry
Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The purpose of this letter is to report the results and recommendations from the U.S. General Services Administration’s (GSA) review of high-performance building certification systems, pursuant to section 436(h) of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA). EISA requires GSA to review high-performance building certification systems every 5 years and provide a recommendation to the Secretary of Energy as to which system(s) would be “most likely to encourage a comprehensive and environmentally sound approach to certification” of high-performance buildings.

To better understand the certification system market, GSA conducted an analysis to:

- identify the systems currently available in the U.S. commercial buildings market,
- address buildings with multiple performance and sustainable design attributes, and
- award certification based on an independent third-party assessor.

GSA further reviewed these certification systems based on specific building requirements found in 10 CFR § 435.300 (2014), EISA, and the 2016 Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings.

Based on its review, GSA recommends that agencies continue to use Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®), version 4.0, or Green Globes®, version 2013, for new construction or major renovation projects. Both systems meet the requirements established under the Department of Energy (DOE) Rule (10 CFR § 435.300 (2014)).

For existing buildings, GSA recommends that agencies consider using one or more of the following five systems: Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) BEST® Sustainable Buildings, version 3.0; Building Research Establishment’s Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM®) In-Use USA, version 2016; Green Globes, version 2013; LEED version 4.0; and the Living Building Challenge (LBC™), version 3.1. Each of these systems contains requirements and options that align to varying degrees with the review criteria, and provides a sound approach to the certification of high-performance buildings.

GSA recommends agencies use the certification system that best meets their mission and portfolio needs, and certify to a level that promotes the high-performance sustainable building

1600 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405-0002
www.gsa.gov
goals referenced in Executive Order 13834, "Efficient Federal Operations." GSA will soon publish guidance for agencies on how to use the certification systems to best achieve Federal requirements (https://www.sftool.gov) and assist agencies in selecting the system that will best meet their needs. It is important for agencies to ensure that the options selected within a certification system are those that align with Federal criteria, in order to realize the benefits of using such a system.

A copy of the High-Performance Building Certification System Summary Report and associated appendices can be found on our website at www.gsa.gov/gbcertificationreview. As certification systems are revised, GSA will work with the system owners to update this information. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or have a member of your staff contact Mr. Kevin Kampschroer, Director of GSA's Office of Federal High-Performance Buildings, at (202) 365-5880 or kevin.kampschroer@gsa.gov.

Sincerely,

Emily W. Murphy
Administrator