



The Administrator

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

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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](http://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](mailto:kevin.kampschroer@gsa.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily W. Murphy  
Administrator