

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Karen Woodsum, (207) 466-5354

Governor LePage Delivers a Blow to Maine's Forests, Buildings

Executive order makes clear-cutting indistinguishable from sound harvesting practices

Portland, ME — Today, Gov. Paul LePage issued an executive order that would encourage deficient forest management standards for lumber used in the construction or modification of state buildings. This action undermines the responsible forest stewardship standards demanded by the US Green Building Council, America's preeminent arbiter of environmentally sound building practices.

In response, Karen Woodsum, Program Director of the Maine Woods Campaign of the Sierra Club released the following statement:

“By his decree affecting the state's buildings, Gov. LePage would disallow use of the US Green Building Council (USGBC)'s LEED green building rating system and favor less rigorous systems in which truly responsible forest management is indistinguishable from harmful timber practices. LePage's executive order puts the timber industry's deficient Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) on an equal footing with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), widely recognized as the most rigorous standard for forest management and conservation. This does a disservice not only to Maine's citizens and environment, but also to its economy: Nearly as much of Maine's forests are certified to FSC's high standards as to timber industry-backed programs like SFI. FSC today is a major driver for Maine's economy AND it protects the environment. Lowering these standards for green buildings hampers our efforts to continue increasing the amount of Maine acreage certified to the more responsible standard.

Gov. LePage's executive order is deceptive and potentially undermines the health and long term sustainability of Maine's forests. USGBC remains a bulwark in the battle to truly separate environmentally-sound building practices from corner-cutting business as usual. It is only through credible, steadfast organizations like USGBC and scientifically-sound rating systems like LEED that citizens, responsible builders, and policy makers can differentiate green practices from industry-sponsored green-washing.”

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