

Trilateral Green Building Construction Task Force Members

Canada

Jonathan Westeinde, Managing Partner, Windmill Development Group (Co-Chair)

Ray Cole, University of British Columbia, Co-founder Green Building Challenge

Phil Jago, Director Buildings Division, Natural Resources Canada

David Moses, Moses Structural Engineers, Inc.

Mexico

Odón de Buen, President, Energía, Tecnología y Educación (ENTE) (Co-Chair)

Jorge Diez de Bonilla, VIVESI

José Picciotto, Picciotto Arquitectos

Teresa Tattersfield Yarza, Coordinadora del legado de Sostenibilidad, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM)

César Ulises Treviño, Presidente, Consejo Mexicano de Edificación Sustentable

United States

Ann Edminster, Consultant, Teacher and Facilitator, Design AVenues (Chair)

Robert Brooks, Director, ICC-ES Environmental Programs

Sean Cahill, Vice President, Development Property, Group Partners LLC

Ryan Colker, Director of the Consultative Council and Presidential Advisor, National Institute of Building Sciences

Ex-Officio

Michael Calvert, Global Practice Lead, Green Building (BBM), Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

Rodrigo Guarneros, Evaluación y Seguimiento de Negociaciones Internacionales - Secretaría de Economía

Iván Islas, Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE)

Innovative Financing for Green Building

Besides promoting education and information-sharing, the task force agreed that a significant obstacle to the green building market in the three countries is the fact that builders and developers bear a high burden of financial risk associated with greening new and existing buildings.

While a variety of financing models are available, said task force members, none has yet effectively been adopted on a wide scale. Nor have any green

building finance mechanisms been evaluated to determine their effectiveness in meeting the different needs for building types and conditions in each of the three countries.

As a result, a good part of the CEC's green building work this year will focus on developing a model business case supporting the need for innovative financing of both new green building construction and green building retrofits. The model will include market projections to demonstrate demand, case studies of specific projects and impacts, and guidelines and indi-

cators for qualifying green projects. It will also propose a framework to engage North American financial institutions and governments in financing green commercial retrofit initiatives.

Members of the task force will take advantage of this year's international Greenbuild conference in San Francisco from November 14 to 16 to get feedback from developers, city planners, financial institutions, and others on this new approach to financing green building in cities across North America.

Greener, Denser Cities

One of the primary goals of promoting green buildings is to green our cities. Smart growth and integrated urban planning – combining a concentration of green buildings, densification, and enhanced transit and transportation systems – are keys to improving the health and quality of life of the 80 percent of North Americans who live in urban areas.

“Re-densification of our cities was viewed as a very, very central concern across North America by members of the task force,” said Edminster.

She said that, as a result, the task force would create a “toolkit for re-densification” based on a cost-benefit analysis of greening existing buildings and other densification measures. The toolkit will focus on proposed policy pathways for implementation and the roles and contributions of municipal and other governments, including marketing efforts, innovative financial mechanisms, and other densification strategies.

Cities Hitching Wagons to Energy Star

With more and more cities focused on cost and emissions savings through energy efficiency, building developers are turning to programs like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star program for benchmarking building performance and evaluating energy savings.

“This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Energy Star program, and today Energy Star certified buildings in cities across America are help-

ing to strengthen local economies and protect the planet for decades to come,” said EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.

According to EPA, these buildings have saved some \$2.3 billion in annual utilities and prevented GHG emissions equal to the emissions from the annual energy use of more than 1.5 million homes.

Earlier this year, Jackson announced EPA’s annual list of American cities with the most Energy Star certified buildings. Some 16,000 buildings have received certification across the country. Large U.S. cities, such as Los Angeles (659 buildings certified) and Chicago (294 buildings), are, of course, near the top of the list; but,

many smaller cities including Riverside, California, and Colorado Springs, Colorado, also are among the top 25 cities.

And, the uptake of Energy Star is happening across North America. Last November, Natural Resources Canada announced an agreement with EPA to create a common platform for measuring and assessing energy performance of new and existing commercial buildings based on EPA’s Portfolio Manager tool.

“Energy benchmarking is an important aspect of an effective strategy to improve energy efficiency in buildings, because what gets measured gets done,” said the Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources. “This

agreement is another example of how we are working with the U.S., through the Clean Energy Dialogue, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change.”

This year, part of the CEC’s green building focus is to support Mexico in developing its own energy benchmarking and rating system that will align with the U.S. and Canadian programs.

Mexico already has a number of tools and incentives in place, including a “green mortgage” program for homeowners, but the new energy rating system should help make it easier for building owners and operators to have a standard approach across the three North American countries. [MW](#)

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