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USGBC-LA Offers CA Manufacturers Financial Incentive to Help Comply with 'Buy Clean California Act', Close Carbon Loophole

LOS ANGELES (June 7, 2018) The [U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles](#) chapter (USGBC-LA), funded by a grant from Climateworks Foundation, has begun to target manufacturers in their efforts to comply with the state's Buy Clean California Act (enacted by AB262 in 2017). The USGBC-LA will assist California manufacturers of steel, flat glass, and mineral wool insulation to both understand what is required to comply, in particular obtaining Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), and by offering incentives of up to \$15,000. The incentive can be used to acquire their EPD and green their own supply chain and manufacturing processes. As of July 1, 2019, the EPDs will be required by the state for procurement on new projects.

"Buy Clean" means that suppliers' emissions performance will be taken into account when an agency is contracting to buy steel, flat glass, and mineral wool (insulation) for infrastructure projects. The goal of the legislation — spearheaded by Sierra Club and BlueGreen Alliance, both of which are advisors to USGBC-LA's program — is to spend California taxpayer money in a way that helps cut the pollution that causes climate change.

The "BuyClean" program creates additional motivation for suppliers to reduce their climate pollution, as manufacturers who have invested in reducing their pollution will see the returns. The State of California spends over \$10 Billion annually on infrastructure, making its substantial purchasing power an attractive market for firms across the U.S., around the world and especially in California. Typical projects include capital facilities associated with land, streets and highways, buildings, and utility systems — i.e. state university campuses to state parks, courthouses and prisons to offices of DMV, State Water Project to office structures and hospitals.

"At a time when we are building more than we have in the last 100 years, closing the carbon loophole is an essential action to reducing our global carbon emissions and mitigating the effects of construction," states [USGBC-LA](#) Executive Director Dominique Hargreaves. "Many manufacturers, particularly those overseas, do not report the embodied emissions that occur during the manufacturing process. There are nearly 25% of emissions not being accounted for in the carbon loophole. The time has come that all emissions are counted, managed, and reduced. We are happy to close the loophole on steel, flatglass, and insulation that will be used across the State of California."

USGBC-LA is in the process of connecting with CA-based manufacturers, CA-based EPD providers, and providing guidance. They are also determining early-adopters that can fast-track to complete an EPD before September to help promote the program during the September 2018 Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco.



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“There are smart manufacturers around the world—and especially in California—who have invested in strategies to reduce their climate pollution. Buy Clean helps California use its purchasing power to recognize the good actors,” said Kathryn Phillips, director of Sierra Club California. “And now, with this new project at the Green Building Council, California manufacturers will get an extra boost to make sure they’re able to show and get credit for their reduced pollution.”

An EPD consists of life-cycle assessment (‘cradle to gate’ or ‘cradle to grave’) information summarized and repackaged into a shorter, more accessible document. It is formally known as a “Type III Environmental Product Declaration,” and sometimes described as a “nutrition label for products”. It provides:

- a list of basic materials and components
- a description of the manufacturing process
- the scope of the life-cycle assessment
- a variety of environmental impact data
- other relevant but optional information, such as results of VOC emissions testing or achievement of third-party certification.

An EPD can also provide a product’s carbon footprint, summarizing the major ways the product affects the environment via impact categories. Some of the most common environmental impact categories you’ll see on an EPD for a building product include: global warming potential, photochemical ozone creation, eutrophication, acidification, primary energy, water consumption and non-renewable fuel consumption.

While an EPD does not mean a product is green, it discloses information about a limited number of impacts, and more information is needed to know whether a product is more sustainable than other options.

For more information on the USGBC-LA program, please email Dominique Hargreaves at dominique@usgbc-la.org.

About U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles

Founded in 2002, USGBC-LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to creating a prosperous and sustainable future within one generation. Our mission is to accelerate all aspects of sustainability in the built environment by delivering access to knowledge, resources, recognition and networking. *Learn, Share and Lead Green.* (www.usgbc-la.org)

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