



Background Information

GREEN BUILDING IN NORTH AMERICA: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Seattle
1-2 May 2007

THE SECRETARIAT REPORT

Despite documented environmental and economic benefits, green building represents only a small fraction of the new construction and building renovation in North America. To examine the status of green building in North America, as well as some of the drivers and barriers to its development, in February 2006 the Secretariat of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) initiated work on the report, "Green Building in North America: Opportunities and Challenges."

This report will examine the current status of, and future prospects for, green buildings in North America. It will highlight the potential for environmental benefits, examine factors behind notable successes and difficulties, and outline public and private measures for fostering the adaptation of green building practices. It will also contain specific recommendations from the Secretariat to the CEC Council—the top environment officials from Canada, Mexico and the United States—on issues raised in the report.

To assist in the development of the report, the Secretariat has convened a distinguished international advisory group with broad expertise relevant to the entire spectrum of green building. Members include prominent developers and architects,

sustainable energy experts, real estate appraisers and brokers, together with local and national government representatives.

In order to gather background information for its report, the Secretariat has commissioned four background papers from teams of authors from Canada, Mexico and the United States. The four papers are:

1. Green Building Scenarios for 2030
2. Working Towards Green Building Financing and Market Consolidation
3. Institutional Efforts for Green Building
4. Working Towards Accessible and Sustainable Housing

THE SEATTLE SYMPOSIUM

The Seattle Symposium is the Secretariat's second public meeting to gather information for this report. A workshop was held on 20-21 February 2007, in Mexico City. Information regarding the Mexico City workshop is available on the CEC web site.

On 1 May, the authors will present their background papers and initiate a discussion with the advisory group members and the public. This will provide a unique opportunity for a wide-ranging dialogue on the status and progress of green building in North America and ideas for improving the market penetration of green buildings by 2030.



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In the evening, the City of Seattle and the Commission for Environmental Cooperation present an urban sustainability forum, *Green Building in 2030 and Beyond: A North American Perspective*, led by prominent architects from Canada, Mexico and the United States.

On 2 May, the CEC's Joint Public Advisory Committee, comprising fifteen members who are appointed by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States, will host a public forum on the CEC Green Building papers

presented the previous day. The main objective will be to gather additional public feedback which will then be incorporated in a report commissioned by JPAC for the Secretariat.

Following the Seattle Symposium, the background papers will be finalized. The Secretariat will then seek public comment on the background papers. In addition, the Advisory Group will prepare a Statement and Advice on Recommendations. The Secretariat will take into account the public comments on the background

papers and the Advisory Group Statement and Advice in preparing the Secretariat report. The Secretariat anticipates presenting the report to the Council by the end of 2007.

Article 13 of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). In preparing such a report, the Secretariat may draw upon any relevant technical, scientific or other information and may use information gathered through public consultations, such as conferences, seminars and symposia.

THE COMMISSION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION

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The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is an international organization created by Canada, Mexico and the United States under NAAEC. The CEC was established to address regional environmental concerns, help prevent potential trade and environmental conflicts, and to promote the effective enforcement of environmental law. The Agreement complements the environmental provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

