

## NLBMDA Seeks Grade-Stamp/Eco-Label for Lumber Products



More than a year ago, the NLBMDA/LBMDI petitioned the American Lumber Standards Committee (ALSC) to establish a new eco-standard covering lumber from sustainable forests, accredit agencies to certify the standard, and to establish a corresponding grade-stamp/eco-label.

- NLBMDA seeks to improve the flow of, and documentation on, lumber of certified-forest origin, from point of production, through the supply chain, utilizing a process innovation, a voluntary industry standard and agency-certified on-product eco-label/grade stamp. Once a log is milled into lumber, the forest of origin will not change.
- On-product labeling of eco-attributes is a market necessity. The new green rating programs (LEED, NGBS, GBI, etc) are seeking ANSI and ICC recognition, and being adopted into local building codes. Builders, green certifiers, local building inspectors and homeowners, want defined, easy to understand, proof of eco-origin on product. Eco-claims and labels are under review by the Justice Department and the subject of proposed Congressional action (Feinstein).
- *As an industry, we have an unbiased (Court sanctioned) standards setting body, which has provided the common framework for lumber trade since 1953.* The American Lumber Standards Committee (ALSC) is a consensus body operating under US Department of Commerce voluntary product standard procedures (NIST oversight). ALSC members are appointed by the US Secretary of Commerce. The purpose of the voluntary standards is to “establish nationally recognized requirements for products and to provide all concerned interests with a basis for common understanding of the characteristics of the products”. We all benefit from standards because they can be referenced in legal documents, design specs, sales contract, or code, and compliance is enforceable.
- Forest-certification verifies a forest’s eco-management practices comply with sustainable forestry standards, including chain-of-custody raw material from forest to point of production. The NLBMDA fully supports forest management practices which promote sustainability and result in long term environmental benefit. The Association recognizes there are multiple, credible sustainable forestry management systems in place throughout North America and World.
- Two leading industry associations, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and the Structural Building Component Association (SBCA), have joined with the NLBMDA in support of an official ALSC eco-standard/eco-label (grade-stamp) for dimensional lumber.
- With strong support among lumber consumers, the Association has begun soliciting lumber producers for support. When asked, the lumber-producing members of NLBMDA’s Manufacturers & Services Council reported nearly 100% of their lumber already originates in certified sustainable-forests.
- The plastics and aluminum industries enjoy substantial public success with their re-cycle labels – even though life-cycle analysis would typically show their products less sustainable than lumber. NLBMDA members want to promote the renewable and sustainable qualities of lumber & forests. Public confidence eco-origin of lumber is best achieved with a simple, universally understood, on-product grade-mark or symbol, a trusted ALSC agency grade-stamp.

**Certification of product (vs forest) is a cost of business for producers, distributors, dealers, and ultimately consumers. As an industry, it’s time to work together to simplify the process, reduce costs, and proudly bring eco-certified lumber to the market.**