

Update on SB 5384

A couple of weeks ago, Cascadia sent out a special action alert urging opposition to Washington State Senate Bill 5384. Good news, SB 5384 never made it out of committee. We would like to congratulate the members of the Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy, led by Senator Phil Rockefeller, for helping the State of Washington keep its commitment to high performing green buildings.

We'd also like to thank all of you who called or emailed your senators and to those of you who responded with comments to our initial missive. We'd like to briefly respond to some of those comments.

Competition for LEED

We received a couple of comments that suggested Cascadia, as a chapter of the US Green Building Council (USGBC), was opposing this bill because we oppose competition for the LEED rating system.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

First, Cascadia receives none of the money the USGBC collects for the registration and certification of LEED buildings. This is an important separation that helps ensure the chapters' autonomy. To further distinguish us, Cascadia incorporated in 1999 as a separate 501(c) 3 non-profit with a completely separate Board of Directors. Less than 5% of our annual budget comes from the USGBC in any form.

Cascadia welcomes competition for LEED that advances the rate of adoption and uptake of green buildings – provided that it doesn't sacrifice already hard won progress in any area of environmental protection. This intention is clear in our support for green residential programs in addition to LEED for Homes – and we launched the Living Building Challenge – a completely separate rating system that encourages people to go even further than what LEED Platinum encourages.

There are some good people that we respect working on the technical development of Green Globes, and while we think that some ideas embedded in the standard have merit, we believe that the tool is bad for our region's forests and has not been tested enough in the marketplace to be positioned alongside LEED as a State endorsed standard. In addition, all of us should treat with caution any "green" rating system or tool largely funded by and pushed by industries actively engaged in slowing real environmental progress.

Thanks again to everyone who helped defeat SB 5384 and to those who sent us comments. Let's keep the dialogue going!

Other Advocacy News

Cascadia officially endorsed Washington State House Bill 1747 and Senate Bill 5854, a.k.a. "Efficiency First." Cascadia staff and volunteers joined other members of the design and environmental communities in helping to shape this legislation and advocate for its passage.

So far, Efficiency First passed out of both the Senate and House Energy Committees and are now being heard by Ways and Means committees in both houses.

Joel Sisolak, our Washington Director, recently published an opinion piece in the Tacoma News Tribune about this legislation. You can read his piece here: <http://www.thenewstribune.com/opinion/othervoices/story/636374.html>.

For more information about Cascadia's efforts on HB 1747 and SB 5854 and how you can get involved, please email info@cascadiagbc.org.