



The Lumber and Building Materials Institute (LBMI), the research and education foundation of the NLBMDA, and the LBMI Green Building Council, respectfully request the American Lumber Standards Committee (ALSC) to adopt a new eco-forest management standard, accredit agencies to certify the standard, and establish a corresponding eco-label (grade stamp).

The NAHB recognizes at least five third-party certifiers, LEED recognizes FSC. Several require suppliers to maintain “chain-of-custody” records for each piece of wood passing through the yard. Why not adopt standard of certified eco-compliance with associated eco-stamp permanently marked on each piece of wood?

Lumberyards, truss plants, and home improvement retailers purchase and stock commodity forest products based on specie, agency-certified grade, size, dryness, etc. Architects, engineers, builders, and the general public, rely on the standards and compliance when designing and erecting structures. Why not an eco-standard? If a standard is acceptable to document the structural strength of a piece of wood, why not it’s ecologic lineage?

The requirement to keep separate purchase records, inventory records, and sales records for every piece of wood required to document LEED or NAHB compliance per structure will add costs at all points in the building materials channel, and introduce new warranty obligations for builder/retailer/truss fabricator/distributor. **Creating an eco-standard would require accredited agency certification and the clear marking of every piece of wood by the producer.** This would be akin to the industry’s evolution from *mill* certified lumber to our present system of ALSC accredited *agency* certification and grade stamps. It is *standards* that have enabled the reliable design of structural framing, and reduced costs at all points in the home-building supply channel.

The first effort to standardize lumber began in 1922 and resulted in the *American Lumber Standard*, published in 1924. This standard, now called the American Softwood Lumber Standard, establishes lumber sizes, methodology for assigning design values, nomenclature, inspection and re-inspection procedures, the National Grading Rule, an accreditation program, and other functions and has evolved over the years with the ever-changing needs of consumers, regulators and manufacturers.

In 1941, the National Lumber Manufacturers Association (NLMA), now the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA), entered into a consent decree with the U.S. District Court. The consent decree required NLMA to create an impartial agency to oversee the standardization, certification, and accreditation for softwood lumber. In 1953 the Court found that the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC), appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, and its independently elected Board of Review (BOR) were impartial bodies appropriate to carry out the decree. Today the ALSC continues to operate under the consent decree and the Voluntary Product Standard system of the Department of Commerce. In 1992 the ALSC began a program to monitor the performance of agencies which supervise the pressure treating of lumber by treating plants operating under the [American Wood Protection Association](#) (formerly American Wood Preserver's Association) standards. The BOR discharges this function by accrediting those agencies and monitoring their performance. In 2001 the ALSC began a program to monitor the performance of agencies supervising the labeling of heat treated wood packaging material produced by wood packaging facilities under the requirements of [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\) Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade](#). The BOR discharges this function pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the [United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(APHIS\)](#) and ALSC policies and procedures.

In addition to the lumber accreditation program, the ALSC also administers accreditation programs for the quality marking of treated lumber produced under standards written and maintained by the American Wood Protection Association (AWPA) and for the labeling of wood packaging material produced under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) *Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade*.

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