

CHBA Briefing Note on New Environmental Organizations

October, 2002

Issue: Private and non-profit groups are developing ambitious proposals for significant new organizations requiring federal funding to promote sustainable building practices.

Overview: There are at least two proposals currently being developed: **The Green Buildings Council** is being proposed by a sub-committee of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) and **Sustainable Buildings Canada** is being proposed by the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance.

The **RAIC** sub-committee includes representatives from the following organizations: RAIC, Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the British Columbia Buildings Corporation (BCBC), Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), the Association of Consulting Engineers of Canada (ACEC), the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), and the Canadian Construction Association (CCA). Other federal departments and agencies represented on the committee include Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), National Research Council (NRC), Department of National Defence, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Environment Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Members also include architects, engineers, building material suppliers, building owners and managers, specification writers and others.

The **Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance (CEEA)** is a Toronto-based consortium of energy supply agencies, manufacturers and service companies. According to its web site, www.energyefficiency.org, the objectives of the CEEA include engaging provincial and federal governments to develop and maintain energy efficiency policies, programs, codes and standards. The CEEA led a multi-stakeholder group that convinced the Ontario government to retain the energy efficiency provisions in the Ontario Building Code. It led a similar campaign that resulted in the BC government also deciding to retain the energy efficiency provisions in their building code. The Alliance has also supported provincial governments that have increased the minimum energy efficiency of products under provincial Energy Efficiency acts as well as adding minimum performance standards for new products not currently covered by these Acts. It recently developed a report with recommendations for the regulation of energy efficiency in the Electricity Sector in Ontario.

The CEEA currently delivers the R-2000 Program in Ontario through Enerquality, its for-profit subsidiary. This company piloted the Energuide for New Houses Program in Ontario and its 'Build Canada' program that provides a design and operational review service to tract builders, both under agreement with NRCan. Other CEEA initiatives include RenoQuality and the Canadian Energy Efficiency Centre for trades training.

Background: 1. The Canada Green Buildings Council

The purpose of the CaGBC is to accelerate the mainstream adoption of green buildings by:

- Providing education, information and training on industry related practices, methods and tools that help designers, builders, operators, owners, manufacturers and others move towards sustainable practices.
- Promoting global adoption of green building practices through implementation of building rating and labeling systems, performance evaluation tools, and assessment criteria.

The CaGBC would establish chapters in each region to support implementation and support work ongoing in Public Works and Government Services Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Department of National Defense, and Environment Canada. It would also work with utility companies and other Sustainable Building-related organizations to promote and enhance their program delivery of such programs as Power Smart and other demand management strategies and initiate or respond to national public policy issues.

The CaGBC will continually develop the LEED rating system and modify it for Canadian circumstances (LEED Canada). CaGBC will be responsible for implementing, certifying and administering LEED Canada and work to support regional-specific LEED Canada variants. LEED Canada implementation will be undertaken by a separate business unit of the CaGBC. The CaGBC will also participate in the development of new LEED products for low-rise residential projects.

2. Sustainable Buildings Canada

The proposed organization is described as “a national forum of interdisciplinary groups dedicated to the development and promotion of programs, tools and policies for the environmentally responsible construction and operation of buildings and sustainable communities.” Its main components would be:

- **Sustainable Buildings Canada (SBC):** This component would be the program delivery agent and deploy programs.
- **R&D organizations:** This component would consist of a number of organizations that perform R&D, policy development and educational functions. They would research technical, social and economic factors in order to develop guidelines and standards for best practices in sustainable development for buildings and also transportation. These activities would be centered or coordinated through the proposed **Canadian Sustainable Development Centre of Excellence (CSDCE)**. A number of organizations, i.e., the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance, York University, the Royal Roads University and the DX Design Exchange are reportedly endeavoring to establish this Centre.

- **Regional organizations:** Regional organizations are proposed, with each regional organization reflecting attributes of the national organization, but with a large degree of regional autonomy. Key functions would include local membership development, program delivery (programs not specified) and data collection for the development of regional performance benchmarks.

The proposal does not include a budget or discuss financial implications of the ideas expressed.

A wide range of functions, activities and/or programs of the proposed organization have been identified including:

- Development of a national energy and environmental database to enable measurement of progress toward sustainable development.
- Identification of areas requiring further research or policy application.
- Creation of a framework for research and development programs.
- Research and development of sustainable design tools and methods.
- Development and maintenance of a directory of green building resources.
- Preparation of responses to national public policy issues (related to sustainable development).
- Development and delivery of educational programs for architects, engineers and the construction industry involved in residential, commercial, institutional and industrial building activities.
- Convening green building conferences and design charrettes.
- Coordination of national infrastructure development.
- Establishment of national standards of performance for use by practitioners.
- Organization and deployment of rating and labelling programs.