

# Leadership Standards Campaign

## FAQs

2-27-2010

**QUESTION:** Why is a Leadership Standards Campaign (LSC) Needed?

**ANSWER:** LSC is needed to:

- Counter the large scale proliferation of greenwash standards and product labeling tools substantially hampering environmental progress because they have caused substantial market confusion
- Encourage the market to embrace the leading standards causing the greatest environmental improvement
- Provide a catalyst for substantial increased market penetration to address current global environmental emergencies making it easier for the government to effectively act especially in stopping Imminent Irreversible Dangerous Climate Change. E.g., LEED allowed the government to adopt green buildings. Most leadership standards are below 2% market penetration.
- Switch the economic advantage to companies adopting leadership standards

Leadership green building and certified sustainable product standards have spawned a number of knock offs with few prerequisites and / or minimal credits to get certified, or without transparency, or credible third party certification and auditing, or a mission to advance the public interest.

They have been developed by (1) industry trade associations to deliberately confuse the market, (2) by others without sufficient rigor in an attempt to meet the huge unfulfilled market demand, and (3) by others to achieve for profit business objectives. Reasons 1&3 create irreconcilable conflicts of interest contrary to the public interest.

These knock off standards or tools do not provide bona fide verifiable and substantive pollution reductions beyond the status quo and fall into the category of greenwash intended to provide industries and others that have developed them, an economic advantage for the status quo. In contrast, there is no market demand for the status quo.

Buildings and products over the global supply chain cover about 80% of global economic activity and pollution. With more stresses on the global economy and health of our Planet, LSC is needed to create more wealth for best practices substantially reducing pollution and stopping Imminent Irreversible Dangerous Climate Change and other tipping points. See the figures below.

Thus, a rapid acceleration of widespread market adoption of Leadership Standards is needed. LSC helps this critically important transformation by

reducing confusion and allowing the market to make an informed decision on Standards substantially reducing pollution beyond the status quo.

**QUESTION:** Do Leadership Standards provide any other benefits?

**ANSWER:** According to the *Capital Markets Briefing Paper: Business Case for Commercializing Sustainable Investment*, released at a 2009 New York Stock Exchange Press Conference of the Capital Markets Partnership, four years of Wall Street due diligence documented that buildings and products certified to Leadership Standards are more profitable, less risky and preferred without exception by investors in a Survey initiated with S&P covering over \$3.3 trillion in assets based on national statistically valid data.

The Green Building Underwriting Standards measure this added economic value.

Further, Leadership Standards provide bona fide defenses to criminal liability under the Lacey Act for selling illegally logged wood, and civil liability under State and Federal truth in advertising law for greenwash.

Greenwash is any communication, Standard or tool regarding environmental benefits, that is inaccurate, deceptive, misleading, or not transparent, or fails to use qualified professionals, and thus violate Federal and State Truth in Advertising Statutes.

**QUESTION:** What will be an outcome of LSC?

**ANSWER:** LSC is intended to further switch the economic incentives in favor of companies that want to do the right thing and certify to Leadership Standards, so they are substantially rewarded economically for reducing pollution.

A successful LSC will help make it unprofitable for greenwash standards and tools and companies promoting and certifying to them.

**QUESTION:** What is the relation of LSC to the Truth In Advertising Campaign?

**ANSWER:** There is no relationship.

The Truth in Advertising Campaign is also important to focus market attention and sunshine on specific greenwash standards.

Thus not only is it deceptive and unlawful for greenwash standards and tools to benefit companies economically, it is also highly inequitable, and repugnant to the public.

For these reasons, the government has won all lawsuits against greenwash by companies, which is unlike the track record in any other area of law (*Teaching Guides, LCA & Sustainable Product Standards*, USGBC Education Provider Program).

For further information on the Truth in Advertising Campaign, please contact [aarons@forestethics.org](mailto:aarons@forestethics.org) or 360-734-2951 x203.

**QUESTION:** What will LSC do?

**ANSWER:** LSC is an educational program of a nonprofit coalition leading environmental groups, nonprofits, and companies meeting the third party leadership standards:

- Creating market awareness of Leadership Standards
- Fostering an understanding why they are important for the environment, economy and social equity
- Countering greenwash standards and tools which are unlawful
- Reducing market confusion so the public can make an informed decision
- Furthering the economic benefits for companies substantially reducing pollution to achieve Leadership Standard Certification
- Involving Fortune 500 companies adopting Leadership Standards to promote the Leadership Standards on their web sites and in their sales and marketing
- Developing a national consensus defense to Lacey Act criminal liability by defining Lacey Act “due care.”

**QUESTION:** What are attributes of Leadership Standards?

**ANSWER:** Leadership Standards:

- Substantially reduce pollution and improve public health and environment
- Are transparent, require third party independent certification and auditing,
- Are administered, developed, and approved by nonprofit public charities or government legitimately fulfilling their mission
- Have a number of prerequisites and minimum levels for certification covering many different attributes.
- Are consistent with truth in advertising law

**QUESTION:** What are examples of Leadership Standards?

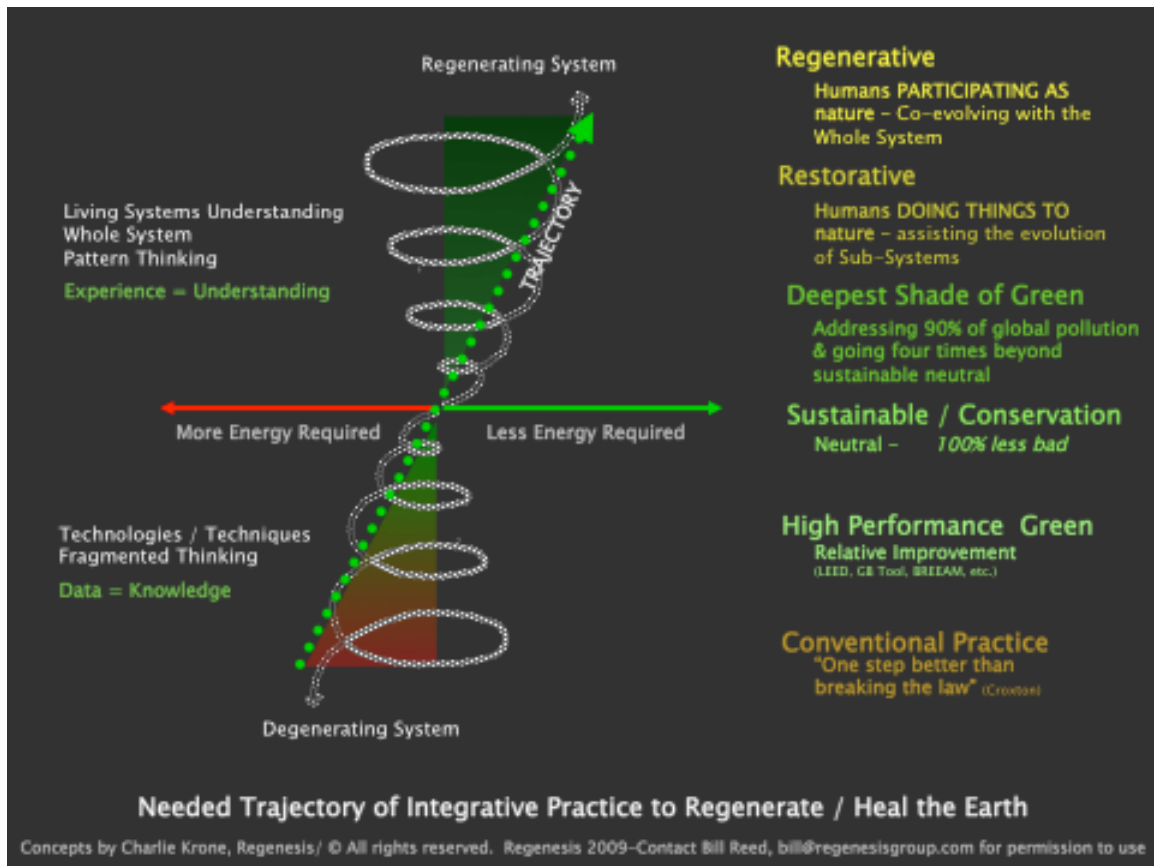
**ANSWER:** Leadership Standards meet the attributes above and include LEED Green Building Standard, Forest Stewardship Council Certified Wood, Green Building Underwriting Standards, EPA ENERGY STAR Buildings and Homes, SMaRT Certified Sustainable Products Standard, GreenPoint RATED Homes, and Climate Neutral Building Standard.

LEED provides credit for ENERGY STAR, FSC Certified Wood and SMaRT Certified Sustainable Products. SMaRT meets all 24 Sustainable Product Standards Evaluation Criteria used as part of the LEED SMaRT Credit Approval, and requires FSC as a prerequisite for all products with wood. The Green Building Underwriting Standard specifies LEED ,ENERGY STAR, Climate Neutral, GreenPoint RATED, FSC, and SMaRT. GreenPoint RATED has been

determined to be equivalent to LEED by a study funded by Pacific Gas & Electric and by the Green Building Underwriting Standards.

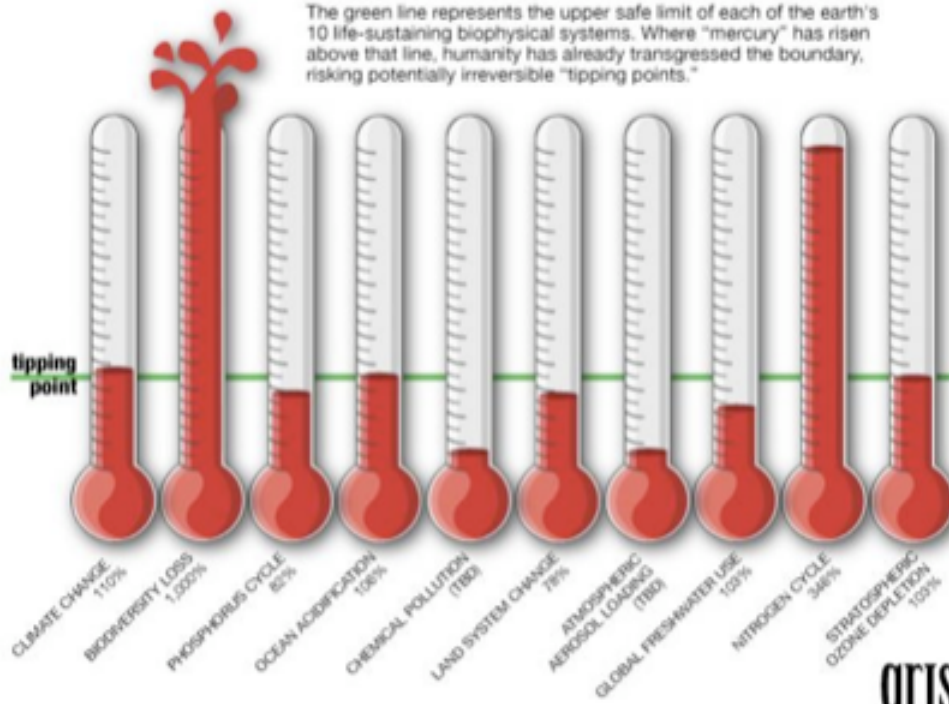
**QUESTION:** How can more information be obtained on LSC?

**ANSWER:** For written information, to set up a presentation, or for questions on LSC, please contact: [jason@jasongrantconsulting.com](mailto:jason@jasongrantconsulting.com) or 202-338-3131.



## The planet has a fever

The green line represents the upper safe limit of each of the earth's 10 life-sustaining biophysical systems. Where "mercury" has risen above that line, humanity has already transgressed the boundary, risking potentially irreversible "tipping points."



Source: Nature, "Planetary Boundaries: A Safe Operating Space for Humanity," 24 Sept. 2009