



## KEY POINTS

- SB 6341 implements unknown and unproven standards that will be costly for the state to develop and maintain.
- There is not commercially viable “embodied energy” standard.
- SB 6341 would increase training costs for design and construction firms.
- WA law does not discriminate against any product and includes specific protections for Washington products.
- LEED is the best standard available for high performance buildings.
- Architects have many dollars invested in LEED training and accreditation. Changing systems would be very costly.

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# OPPOSE WEAKENING OF HIGH PERFORMANCE PUBLIC BUILDING STANDARDS

## Oppose SB 6341 Weakens the State’s Sustainable Building Standards

*Sponsors: Senators Hargrove and Schoesler*

### Background

Washington State law requires that all public buildings receiving state funds be designed and built to high performance building standards. The law includes several standards, but relies primarily on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standard. The law has been working well and agencies have easily implemented the standards. In fact, public buildings now regularly outperform the LEED Silver standard by reaching Gold and even Platinum certifications.

### SB 6431 Would Increase State Costs to the State

While the program is titled “LEED Plus W,” it does not in fact utilize LEED. Instead, it would have the State of Washington create a new program and utilize the copyrighted name. The AIA|WA supports the use of private-sector developed standards that are widely available in the marketplace. It is not wise to eliminate a standard that is working well the world over with one that the state has to finance, develop and maintain.

### SB 6341 Establishes a Standard that is not Feasible or Enforceable

SB 6341 establishes a new “embodied energy” standard that is not developed, proven or tested. At the request of the legislature the University of Washington conducted a thorough analysis of “Life Cycle Cost Assessment” tools, including embodied energy. Their conclusion is while there is promising research; there is not a commercially available or viable standard that could be implemented into state law. The report states that, “Implementing any such requirements could result in substantial unintended consequences.” (page ES-4).

### SB 6341 Would Increase Training Costs for Design and Construction Firms

The LEED standards are widely known and utilized by design and construction firms. Firms have invested a great deal of resources to learn about them and have their staff accredited in their implementation. Creating a new state standard would require firms to retrain all of their staff to use an unknown and unproven design standard. There would be a substantial learning curve that would lead to increased construction costs through change orders and other problems.

### SB 6341 is Based on a False Notion of Bias

SB 6341 is based on the premise that state law discriminates against Washington wood or other products. There is no evidence of an anti-wood bias in the law. In fact, the law gives specific protections to Washington wood and other local materials. If anything, SB 6341 could result in a bias against other Washington materials by promoting a wood preference. The law should be product-neutral, leaving product choices to the agencies and their architects based on the needs and goals of each project.

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