

## Green Building Groups Affirm Support for Zero Emissions Buildings

Nine leading green building and energy efficiency certification organizations in the U.S. announced that they will embed, align or exceed the recently finalized [National Definition of a Zero Emissions Building](#) in their certifications. The announcement coincides with Climate Week in New York City to bring more attention to the importance of decarbonizing the buildings sector, which is responsible for more than one-third of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

In June, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced the definition with a goal of establishing a more commonly accepted understanding of what a zero-emissions building is, along with greater transparency and standardization around achieving it. The initiative is part of the Biden-Harris administration's ambitious efforts to set goals and generate momentum for reducing the buildings sector's emissions.

The announcements from the certification organizations provide clear pathways for buildings owners to demonstrate that their properties meet the definition. Many certifications go even further to demonstrate climate leadership by exceeding the criteria of the definition. Certifications making this announcement include the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED v5; Earth Advantage's new construction certifications; Enterprise Community Partners' Green Communities Plus; Green Building Initiative's Green Globes Journey to Net Zero Carbon; Home Innovation's NGBS Green+ ZERO EMISSIONS; International Living Future Institute's Zero Carbon; PHIUS ZERO; Pearl's Pearl Zero Emissions; and The Passive House Network's PLUS and PREMIUM Standards.

Partner organizations who contributed to the definition praised the collaborative effort:

- [U.S. Green Building Council](#): "As financial institutions, investors, and insurers grapple with climate risks, we see the baseline established by this definition as key to evolving market expectations. USGBC is committed to aligning LEED v5 rating systems by including specific LEED certifications designed to certify projects to the national definition. As markets increasingly demand greater sustainability, we hope and expect that it will be a popular approach for future LEED projects."
- [Enterprise Community Partners](#): "Enterprise Community Partners is proud to support the equitable transition of the affordable housing building sector to zero emissions and has calibrated the 2020 Enterprise Green Communities Criteria to support developers that are aligning their emissions targets with the National Definition for a Zero Emissions Building. We applaud the leadership of the Department of Energy and the White House on this important call-to-action. Developments meeting the National Definition for a Zero Emissions Building will be on track to earn our highest level of Certification: Green Communities Plus."
- [International Living Future Institute](#): "The International Living Future Institute (Living Future) applauds this effort and is excited to offer multiple certification pathways that align with National Definition for a Zero Emissions Building. All projects certified under Zero Carbon Certification will meet or exceed the requirements, as will Living Building Challenge projects achieving Living or Energy Petal Certification."
- [PHIUS](#): "PHIUS ZERO standard meets and exceeds the National Definition for a Zero Emissions Building."
- [Earth Advantage, Inc.](#): "Having a standard national definition for what constitutes the operations of a Zero Emissions building is an important step towards advancing the design and construction of residential buildings and will provide a clear path for further reducing emissions across all

building types. Earth Advantage is proud to be aligning our certification programs with the new definition in the coming years."

- [Green Building Initiative](#): "We applaud the exceptional efforts of the White House and the administration in conducting outreach to all stakeholders as they worked to develop this definition. As a national certification system, we are pleased to be able to incorporate the Zero Emissions Building (ZEB) definition into GBI's Green Globes Journey to Net Zero Carbon Certification. GBI believes that by amplifying the ZEB definition, we will support the private sector's goals together with the goals of the federal government's leased portfolio to collectively transform and significantly reduce the built environment's carbon footprint."
- [Home Innovation Research Labs](#): "We are thrilled to be able to offer NGBS Green+ ZERO EMISSIONS certification based on the White House ZEB definition. Like the NGBS Green certification options that have been available previously, we aim to provide a rigorous yet affordable choice to the building industry. This NGBS Green+ ZERO EMISSIONS certification will recognize buildings that have achieved exceptional energy efficiency, utilize renewable energy sources, and have minimal environmental impact. By setting a high bar for green building practices, we aim to inspire more sustainable construction and drive the transition towards a low-carbon future."
- [Pearl Certification](#): "The new national zero emissions buildings definition sets an ambitious goal for America's homes and buildings. Pearl Certification is proud to incorporate it into our Pearl Zero Emissions Certification to provide homeowners, builders, and contractors with the opportunity to recognize homes with cutting-edge energy efficient and all-electric technology powered by solar energy. It's important for zero emissions homes to be visible and properly valued, and we applaud the White House and the administration for their work on this issue."
- [The Passive House Network](#): "The Passive House Network is pleased to support the Zero Emission Buildings definition. These align with the core outcomes readily achievable everywhere via implementation of Passive House Institute's PLUS and PREMIUM standards."

Additionally, manufacturing, labor, design professional and investor organizations provided supportive statements on the definition:

- [ASHRAE](#): "ASHRAE is fully committed to advancing building decarbonization, and we are proud to support the National Definition of a Zero Emissions Building. By strengthening this definition with ASHRAE's referenced resources, we hope to collectively guide the transition of the building industry in reducing its carbon footprint and drive meaningful transformation towards a sustainable future."
- [AIA](#): "The American Institute of Architects is committed to continuing to advocate for the Administration's goals and will work to reference and support the Definition and its goal of standardizing zero emissions within the AIA 2030 Commitment encompassing approximately 1,300 practices and tracking over 3.8 billion gross square footage of buildings nationwide."
- [Urban Land Institute \(ULI\)](#): "The Urban Land Institute is pleased to see the federal government's leadership in encouraging and accelerating the building sector's journey to net zero. Buildings that meet the new national zero emissions definition will also align with Track 1 and Track 2 of the ULI Greenprint Net Zero by 2050 Goal."
- [New Buildings Institute](#): "NBI applauds the efforts for a National Definition for Zero Emissions Buildings that is grounded in energy efficiency, free of on-site emissions from energy use and powered by carbon pollution free energy. The three pillars of the definition are well aligned with NBI's vision and mission as a non-profit organization committed to advancing best practices, codes, and policies through market leadership, research, guidance, and technical advocacy"

toward a built environment that equitably delivers community benefits and climate solutions. We are especially excited about the commitment of the Federal Government to lead by example and use the criteria for all new and renewing leases starting 2030, this is a huge deal and sends a strong market signal for an upcoming surge in demand for such buildings.”

- [Architecture 2030](#): “Architecture 2030 endorses the National Definition for a Zero Emissions Building as a means to achieve rapid emissions reductions in building operations across the entire US building stock. We believe the definition will align the US building sector and support our mission to transform the built environment, which is key to addressing the climate crisis.”
- [Multifamily Impact Council](#): “The Multifamily Impact Council is proud to share its support for the Federal definition of a Zero Emissions Building. This clear call to action from the Department of Energy establishes a minimum performance threshold for financing and benchmarking entities to lean on, as we collectively progress along the path towards a cleaner building future. As an organization committed to the creation and continual elevation of meaningful, industry relevant standards to drive positive social and environmental change, we commend the White House on this important step and the inclusive approach they took to get here. We look forward to supporting our members as they strive to meet this high bar in the months and years to come.”
- [SMART](#): “The proposed National Definition for Zero Emissions Buildings — one that emphasizes the importance of energy efficiency, giving owners clear guidelines to ensure their buildings are green — is a crucial step forward in our nation’s work to create a clean economy. HVAC systems account for approximately 35% of building energy consumption, and SMART sheet metal workers have long been the trained, certified professionals that building owners rely on to ensure energy efficiency in those systems. We applaud the Biden-Harris administration’s proposed definition, and our members look forward to taking on this work.”