



Natural Stone Certification Program

Fact Sheet

Sustainability has emerged as perhaps the seminal issue of this decade, both in the US and globally. Over the last three years, the members of the United States natural stone industry have worked to characterize and ultimately improve the overall sustainability of its members and the products they manufacture. In partnership with the Center for Clean Products at the University of Tennessee, the Natural Stone Council (NSC), an organization comprised of the major U.S. stone industry associations and their members, has conducted a comprehensive benchmarking of industry operations, identified and communicated best practices, made industry- and product environmental data publicly available, and evaluated stone cladding products against alternatives using a life-cycle framework. Through these efforts, the industry and the architectural community are gaining a valuable understanding about the environmental strengths and liabilities of stone relative to other materials and a key strategic goal has emerged. The time has come for the natural stone industry to develop and implement a natural stone standard and certification process to effectively position dimensional stone, its quarries and its producers in the increasingly competitive environment that is evolving around green building construction.

Benefits to the Stone Industry of a Stone Standard:

Building a credible certification program for stone requires both the development of robust standards through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the formation of a credible compliance and verification system. When completed, the system will offer the following benefits to stone industry members from around the globe who desire to do business in the U.S. construction market:

- Establish a set of well-defined environmental and human health metrics recognized by the green building community as an indicator of leadership sustainability performance.
- Provide an important opportunity to educate key members of the design and construction community, government, and environmental advocacy groups about the production of stone products.
- Create a mechanism that rewards natural stone companies that demonstrate environmental leadership through commitment to sustainable operations and continued innovation.
- Preempt competitor marketing claims by proactively addressing potential stone-related environmental and human health concerns in a multi-stakeholder, science based forum (i.e. radon, dust, etc.).
- Harmonize national and international environmental requirements for stone quarrying and production.
- Encourage transparent chain of custody reporting in support of LEED certification and other reputable sustainability platforms.
- Create parity between stone and other competitive products covered by existing certification programs.

How is the stone standard being developed?

The Dimensional Stone standard is being developed through an ANSI-based multi-stakeholder process under the leadership of Jack Geibig, President of Ecoform, in partnership with the National Sanitary Foundation (NSF). Ecoform, a group staffed in part by researchers from the UT Center for Clean Products, has extensive experience in developing leading environmental product standards for a wide range of products, including standards for green cleaning chemicals, toys, building products, and consumer electronics. NSF is the leading ANSI accredited development organization in North America.

The development process establishes a core committee tasked with overseeing the development of criteria, performing technical research and voting on the final standard. A larger group of stakeholders is

also engaged in various aspects of review and ultimately will approve individual criteria and the final standard.

Who can become a stakeholder?

Stakeholders play an integral part in the criteria development process, providing valuable perspective, knowledge and expertise. Stakeholders are continuously being sought from a variety of sources including the stone industry, government, environmental advocacy, academia, green building and design, and other relevant groups. Key stakeholders outside the stone industry who have already been contacted include the Cascadia Green Building Council, U.S. EPA, U.S. Green Building Council, East Tennessee Green Building Council, Forrest Stewardship Council, and the Healthy Building Network.

What will fall within the scope of the standard?

The ANSI standard will focus on stone being consumed in North America. Both North American based stone products and operations and imported products will be included and it is our intent to develop the standard with the participation and cooperation of the international stone community. Criteria will be established defining both environmentally preferable products and stone production operations. Several informational meetings have already occurred in the U.S. and Europe with additional meetings scheduled to coincide with major stone industry events such as Stonetech in Nurnberg and Marmomacc in Verona.

How can international stakeholders participate?

An ad hoc group of international stakeholders will be formed and charged with review of the draft as it is being developed by the Joint Committee (Domestic consensus body). International stakeholders will provide the international perspective to the Joint Committee. Currently there is one international member and one observer on the Joint Committee. These two international stakeholders will serve as liaisons between the two committees. This ad hoc group may meet in conjunction with events such as Stonetech in Nurnberg and Marmomacc in Verona or teleconferences may be scheduled at various times to accommodate the time zones of those interested stakeholders.

How will products be certified under the standard?

A certification and compliance protocol, to be developed concurrently with the standard, will govern the certification process. Select independent certifying organizations meeting this protocol will be allowed to certify products under the standard. All products certified under the standard will be tagged with a green label to be developed and branded by the stone industry, similar in nature to other green product labels in the marketplace.

How is the standard being funded and how much will it cost?

Initial funding for the development of the standard is being provided through private donations by members of the national and international dimensional stone industry. Total funding for the development of the ANSI standard and compliance and certification program is expected to approach \$400,000.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about the development of a stone standard, to sign up as a stakeholder in the development process, or to inquire about how your organization might contribute, please contact Jack Geibig at jgeibig@utk.edu or John Mattke at jmattke@coldspringgranite.com. To view more information regarding NSC, you may visit <http://genuinestone.com> or to contribute to NSC you may download the donor form via the link: http://genuinestone.com/docs/NSC-Donation_Form.pdf.

