

**BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard Stakeholder Meeting**  
**Monday April 30 and Tuesday May 1, 2007**  
**Draft Meeting Summary**

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Please go to <http://BIFMA.org/public/SusFurnStd.html> for BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard documentation.

**Day One**

**I. Welcome/Introductions/Anti-trust Statement**

Tom Reardon called the meeting to order and welcomed the group. Jaclyn Bowen read the anti-trust statement. The group went around the room giving self-introductions.

**II. Review of Agenda and Meeting Goals/ Previous Meeting Minutes/Approval**

Tom stated that it had been four months since the stakeholder group last met. During this time, the task groups worked on clarifying credits and a draft standard was circulated for stakeholder review and comment. Tom Reardon added that some furniture manufacturers also took part in a pilot program to test the draft standard. The purpose of this meeting is to review the comments received on the draft and establish a plan for moving forward.

Bill Stough then reviewed the proposed meeting agenda with the stakeholders and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting.

**Motion:** Larry Dykhuis moved to accept the January meeting summary as written. Fred Stevens seconded.

**Discussion:** None.

**Vote:** All in favor.

***Motion passed.***

**III. Discussion of Overarching Issues**

Bill Stough opened the discussion with the observation that the vast majority of comments received were positive in nature and focused on helping to improve the BIFMA SAS. Bill asked if there was anyone at the meeting today that thought the BIFMA SAS should not move forward. No one expressed that view. Bill then suggested that the review start with a discussion of overarching issues, and that the work groups meet to discuss comments specific to their area.

By reviewing the draft standard and performing a pilot, some of the stakeholders developed some concerns. Some were surprised with the limited level of understanding and involvement of the supply chain and what the supply chain knew about chemicals of concern. Essentially, they were educating the supply chain on the process.

Larry Dykuis stated that he circulated the draft standard to a dozen or so individuals in his company to get a new perspective on the standard. He reported that there was initial concern,

but ultimately as the group became familiar with the requirements there was a belief that it goes in the right direction. They noted the importance of the supply chain in working with the OEM. Mark LaCroix stated that he expects to see an evolution in the supply chain because of the requirements this standard imposes. In general, all thought that that the pilot and standard review/comment period was a positive experience. Several commented on the potential need to conduct supply chain educational initiatives to help them grow with OEMs as they respond to the market.

Bill Stough encouraged the work groups to dig into the issues expressed in the comment spreadsheet during the breakout sessions and bring back the unresolved issues that need to be discussed in an open forum.

It was suggested for the task group chairs to respond to each and every comment received.

The stakeholders reviewed some of the overarching questions. These related to:

- Deducting points for severe violations (such as breach of environmental policies.)
- The difficulty in implementing credits in smaller companies
- Some credits in the standard may be perceived as complex or confusing because of inconsistencies in terminology, formats, and levels.
- Balance of credits between sections.
- Lack of clarity when referencing other standards; is all or a portion of the specified standard applicable?
- USGBC is recognized as the leader in green buildings, however the standard does not recognize/credit LEED buildings.
- It is not clear how to apply the standard to a grouping of products or whether points within the value chain must be relative to the product being assessed (section 4).
- Some credits reference owned facilities, manufacturing location, final assembly, tier 1, etc... while others reference finished product, components, and raw materials. It is not always clear how the credit is to be applied for the different business models (e.g. companies who do not manufacture, assemblers, vertically integrated).
- Issues with how even the point allocation is between the four elements
- Need to discuss how manufacturers will use the standard

Clinton Boyd stated that in response to the suggestion to deducting points for severe violations (such as breach of environmental policies), this has already been addressed as part of the prerequisites. Additionally, third-party certifiers will have established policies for how certification can be revoked if a product falls out of compliance. It was suggested for this to be further clarified in section 7.1.1. Gabe Wing stated that the Guidance document provides EPA language for defining significant nonconformance.

Kimball was 1 of the 8 companies to pilot the document. They also provided many of the overarching comments. They expressed their concern that the document was difficult to follow and some of the requirements appeared difficult to implement. Some of the credits in the standard appeared to be more stringent than LEED. They questioned the objective of the

standard: Do we want to drive industry or have only the best of the best companies be able to comply? How would we validate if a threshold is too high or too low? What would be the cost of transitioning operations to implement the suggested changes? Gary Gardner of Gensler stated that he was commenting from the customer perspective as a potential specifier of a product and he believed that over time as the demand increases, industry would migrate in the direction of the BIFMA SAS. He encouraged the stakeholders to not worry about the firms that can't keep up, but to instead individually set a precedent to improve the world we live in. Gary Gardner further added that just this year, Washington DC is requiring that all projects using government money to have silver LEED ratings. Gensler had clients that didn't want to talk about LEED 2 months ago, but now there is a perceived value change. He stated that the BIFMA SAS requirements that go beyond LEED needed to be celebrated.

John Shank stated that the formatting throughout the standard is confusing. Not the font and font size, rather the continuity across sections especially with regard to point allocation. Others shared Kimball's concern that there is too much weighting around chemicals. Scott Lesnet questioned the reliability, available, and accuracy of the chemical quantities generated. Considering that the Human and Ecosystem Health task group has a total of 23 points to work with, they will look to address these concerns by revising the point allocations.

The stakeholders discussed the possibility of adding an economic component to the standard. Jaclyn Bowen added that Economic Sustainability would be a section in the Sustainable Flooring standard. Some stakeholders were concerned that this information was proprietary, especially for private companies. Bill Stough stated that he would look into this issue.

John Shank and John Kaufmann continued with their explanation of concerns. For many of the credits, a baseline needs to be established first before assigning any credits for improvement. Randy Carter suggested that an explanation of first, second, and third party certification be included somewhere in the standard (informational annex or guidance document.)

The stakeholders next discussed the possibility of tying in facilities-based credits to LEED building. The stakeholders had questions around how projects would be grouped. It was suggested that product line and product boundaries be define. It was also suggested for each task group to think about how different business models (e.g. companies who do not manufacture, assemblers, vertically integrated would apply this standard).

The stakeholders discussed Lou Newett's concern of the 1-year limitation on GreenGuard. Randy Carter read a prepared statement that said the following:

*"As the chairman of the BIFMA Furniture Emissions Subcommittee I recognize there are conflicting opinions about the relative equivalency of the BIFMA Furniture Emissions Standards (FES) and Greenguard. I respect these opinions.*

*The one-year limitation was a compromise position reached by the stakeholders several weeks ago in recognition of several significant differences between Greenguard and BIFMA. Since that time Greenguard has indicated they are making some substantial changes:*

- i. change from four to seven days in chamber*
- ii. open to using the BIFMA workstation models with key exceptions*

*These changes MAY make the one-year limitation irrelevant, depending upon whether or not the method is publicly available and pending the results of a detailed technical review by the Human and Ecosystem Health group.*

*I offer four points in support of the one-year limitation on specifically referencing Greenguard:*

- 1. Careful examination of the criteria shows that Greenguard is not more stringent than BIFMA X7.1 in all cases, even after the recent changes to the Greenguard program.*

2. One of the express goals of the BIFMA SAS development is to "help harmonize sustainability standards for the office furniture industry" (see goals in guidance document). While many manufacturers, including Steelcase, have a significant investment in Greenguard certification, the soon-to-be ANSI approved BIFMA M7.1 test method represents the best, openly developed, voluntary, consensus standard test method for office furniture available today (see this link: [http://www.bifma.org/standards/FES\\_canvass.html](http://www.bifma.org/standards/FES_canvass.html) ).

3. The draft emissions credits of the BIFMA SAS also include criteria not contained within the BIFMA furniture emissions standards (i.e., component criteria and CA 01350 criteria). These differences also necessitate the standardization on "ANSI" BIFMA M7.1 for testing and modeling.

4. It is not clear to me that an American National Standard can reference a proprietary document like the Greenguard test method for conformity assessment.

*This does not mean that Greenguard certified products can not be used to achieve the credit, as the Greenguard method has continued to change and in some cases will certainly be deemed acceptable for compliance with one (or potentially both) of the BIFMA SAS emissions credits.*

*This issue is best addressed by the Human and Ecosystem Health group and I note the group intends to discuss the emissions credits after the 10:30 am break tomorrow."*

The Human and Ecosystem Health work group agreed to revisit the issue during the breakout sessions.

The stakeholders next discussed the rating criteria. Scott Lesnet expressed his concern to make sure that there is a structured framework so that the information from company A and B are constructed in the same format. This will require common definitions, consistent process boundaries, defined weighting and normalized values. A standardized output template would be a valuable way to report the performance of a product.

The stakeholders adjourned for the day.

## **Day Two**

The stakeholders participated in work group breakout sessions in the morning.

Following lunch, Kevan Lawlor, President and CEO of NSF International, welcomed the group and thanked the stakeholders for their standards development contributions and dedication to public health and safety.

Prior to starting the Work Group report outs, Bill Stough asked the chairs for their overall impressions after reviewing stakeholder comments. The following general observations were given:

- Initially the standard seemed overwhelming, upon investigation and breaking down the requirements into smaller segments the standard was viewed as helpful and beneficial;
- Obtaining supply chain participation will be difficult. Many are hesitant to share chemical information, we may need a supply chain education program; and
- Most felt if the industry is to make progress on the issue of sustainability, suppliers will need to grow with the OEMs.

## **IV. Work Group Reports**

### **A. Social Responsibility**

Larry Dykhuis gave an update on the progress of the Social Responsibility task group. During the breakout sessions, the Social Responsibility task group went through the comments received on their section. Suggested modifications to the section include:

- Modifying the existing language to address comments on section 8.4.
- Do not be prescriptive in identifying diversity metrics since diversity varies depending on the location.
- The question posed with regard to 8.6 have not been fully responded to.
- There was a suggestion to extend the requirements to Tier 2 suppliers.
- Increase number of community involvement activities to two.

The Social Responsibility task group made good progress on comments and will make the suggested modifications to the language. They are also considering adding an economic indicator credit that could result in a net increase of 1 credit for the section.

### **B. Materials**

Mark LaCroix and Jim Kozminski gave an update on the progress of the Materials task group. During the breakout sessions, the Materials task group went through the comments received on their section and rated them into A, B, or C priorities. Specific work they have to do moving forward include:

- Identifying terms in need of definitions
- Add packaging requirements
- Revisit life cycle points; it might be reduced
  - possible third point for third party review
- Need to be tougher on defining material efficiency boundaries
- 80% threshold may be reduced to 70%
- Address the use of bio-based non-wood materials; some dissension about how they are treated differently
- Seems appropriate to have a point for initiating the use of bio-based materials
- Appears as though FSC wood is of a higher value than SFI; some concern and dissension that this may be a possible exception to June 2006 motion.

The stakeholders discussed the FSC issued and encouraged the Materials task group to draft language and require materials used to meet the specification of the FSC.

### **C. Energy**

John Shank and Anne Saliers gave an update on the progress of the Energy task group. During the breakout sessions, the Energy task group went through the comments received on their section. After changes, an estimated 6 to 8 points could be eliminated. Suggested modifications to the section include:

- Including an alternate to Energystar
- How does embodied energy pertain to raw material, components, and assemblies?
- Transition language to accommodate cradle-to-gate and gate-to-gate and restructure points to ensure clarity.
- Unfortunately, the ASTM standard for energy providers that generates an Environmental Performance Index has been delayed. The Energy task group will

be eliminating the reference to that standard and going back to the onsite and offsite renewable energy language.

These changes could result in a net decrease of 6-8 credits for the section.

#### **D. Human and Ecosystem Health**

Denise Van Valkenburg and Gabe Wing gave an update on the progress of the Human and Ecosystem Health task group. During the breakout sessions, the Human and Ecosystem task group went through the comments received on their section. The group will evaluate the section to make sure it is not too heavily weighted in relation to others. Suggested modifications to the section include:

- Providing additional clarity by defining more terms
- Adjust language to comply with global harmonization standard and REACH
- Develop a list of chemical of concerns- (normative or informational)
- Agreed that all chemicals will be addressed to the .01 percent level, but will identify a way to accommodate de minimis levels
- More work to follow on air emissions. The criteria are mostly based on the BIFMA furniture emissions standard but that standard does not provide guidance on how to treat components.

The stakeholders discussed referencing proprietary standards. Some stakeholders believed that referencing GreenGuard would be making an exception to the June 2006 motion. Scott Lesnet expressed his concern that this issue does not need to be continually revisited by the Human and Ecosystem Health task group. The full stakeholder group has already expressed their desire to not reference proprietary standards. The committee should simply stated the requirements that need to be met (such as meeting the requirements of BIMFA X7.) How a manufacturer chooses to demonstrate compliance, be it through GreenGuard or any other certification agency testing to those provisions, then so be it.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The stakeholders discussed the next steps.

They agreed to hold two conference calls; one in late May and one in late June. Mark LaCroix stated that the Materials group is in need of additional task group members. Please contact Jaclyn Bowen if you are interested in getting involved. Jaclyn Bowen also encouraged task group chairs to let her know when you wanted to set up conference calls.

The stakeholders discussed how to track the changes that take place on this document. Jaclyn Bowen encouraged them to use the track changes feature or the highlight and cross-out function in Word. Prior to the next face-to-face meeting, task group chairs should send their respective sections of the standard to Jaclyn Bowen to compile into a revised draft. Then stakeholders can review this new document to see how their suggested revisions were incorporated.

The stakeholder group will look to reconvene in late July.

**Attendees:**

**Via Conference Call:**

Burgoyne, Dan- *State of California*  
Steady, Scott- *AQS*  
Stein, Toni- *California DHS*  
Taube, Ben- *GreenGuard*

**In Person:**

Bestervelt, Lori- *NSF International*  
Bowen, Jaclyn- *NSF International*  
Boyd, Clinton- *Sustainable Research Group*  
Bren, Craig- *Tuohy Furniture*  
Carter, Randy- *Steelcase Inc.*  
Chalmer, Paul- *National Center for Manufacturing Sciences*  
Christopher, Norman- *GVSU*  
Dykhuis, Larry- *Herman Miller Inc.*  
Freund, Dave- *Victor Innovatex*  
Gardner, Gary- *Gensler*  
Howes, Ted- *SCS*  
Kaufmann, John- *Kimball*  
Kneen, Kurt- *NSF International*  
Kozminski, Jim- *Haworth*  
LaCroix, Mark- *Interface*  
Lapekas, Sean- *Herman Miller*  
Lawlor, Kevan- *NSF International*  
Lesnet, Scott- *HNI Corp.*  
Losey, Kelley- *Cascade Engineering*  
McInnis, Beth- *Victor Innovatex*  
Mika, Mary Ellen- *Steelcase*  
Miller, Brad- *BIFMA International*  
Newett, Lou- *Knoll Inc.*  
Rabiah, Janan- *ACT*  
Rauwerda, Laura- *State of Michigan DEQ*  
Reardon, Tom- *BIFMA International*  
Saliers, Anne- *izzydesign*  
Shank, John- *Kimball International*  
Sicilian, Nancy- *Steelcase*  
Sikorski, Georgina- *CRI/CARE*  
Stevens, Fred- *Group Dekko*  
Stough, Bill- *Sustainable Research Group*  
Trinkel, Steve- *Kimball*  
Van Valkenburg, Denise- *Steelcase Inc.*  
Wilson, Jane- *NSF International*  
Wing, Gabe- *Herman Miller Inc.*  
Worthy, Karen- *Global Contract Inc.*  
Wyatt, Ed- *SCS*