

Transparency drives improvements in health and environmental outcomes at a product, building and societal level

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Manufacturers in the building sector have been leaders in the product sustainability space for two decades because of certification programs like LEED. As LEED evolves and new programs come online, manufacturers must also evolve their practices to keep up. As the industry strives to improve building practices from form to function and everything in between, it is increasingly important to broaden our view of optimization to go beyond how a building performs to how the building itself, and the individual products that make up the whole, impact people and the environment. Increasingly, attributes such as indoor air quality, lifecycle impacts and most recently, material health, are driving factors in the more holistic definition of performance.

Product ingredient transparency – understanding and publishing the human health impacts of materials and ingredients used to make a product – has become more important in the industry as both professionals and consumers seek to better understand the potential adverse health and environmental impacts of the products they interact with daily.

Founded in 2011, The Health Product Collaborative provides a standardized approach to product ingredient transparency. Health Product Declarations (HPDs) act as a reporting tool to standardize the disclosure of all ingredients in a product and allow specifiers to make informed decisions on product purchasing as it pertains to sustainability and material health. Given its open standard format, the declaration is unbiased and freely licensed to all – intended to encourage widespread participation.

HPDs enable building industry decision makers including architects, designers, builders and contractors to evaluate products based on how they will impact a building's environment and its occupants – an increasingly important quality for product specification.

In addition to trade interest, across the world, consumer interest in sustainable products and product transparency is increasing. [Nielsen](#) recently reported 66 percent of the global population is willing to pay more for products and services that come from companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact.

Transparency is not a trend that is going away. In fact, most green building rating systems including, LEED, BREEAM, ESTIDMA, GreenStar and Living Building Challenge have already incorporated life cycle-based product disclosures to their list of qualifications. LEED has gone a step further, offering material ingredients credits for HPDs (or other transparency labels) in their standard and Living Building Challenge requiring that all products have a product ingredient transparency label.

Assessment tools like the HPD give manufactures of building products a look into their product makeup that benefits not only their customers but impacts the industry. The more companies across the building industry adopt the practice of product transparency, the better educated consumers are, and as a result a greater number of lower-impacting materials and products are introduced into the marketplace.

Specific to the fenestration industry, material health transparency is growing but still in its infancy with very few manufacturers adopting the process and publishing HPDs. As part of Andersen's commitment to sustainability, the company recently announced its first two Health Product Declarations® (HPDs) for Andersen® E-Series Casement/Awning window and Andersen® E-Series Auxiliary window.

By continuing to increase material health transparency through declarations like HPDs, building product suppliers like Andersen can work alongside companies to optimize the building sector, set an example in the industry and positively impact people and communities.