



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, November 29, 2012
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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

San Francisco Including Environmental Accomplishments in Official Property Records

Hundreds of residential properties and thousands of housing units have earned Green Labels such as LEED, ENERGYSTAR, GreenPoint Rated certification

Assessor's data shows at least 35% of commercial square footage now has a Green Label

[SAN FRANCISCO, California] – Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting and Department of Environment Director Melanie Nutter today announce “Green Labels” – which recognize ecologically-sustainable building practices – are now being included in the official land records maintained by the City and County of San Francisco for the first time ever.

There are more than 1,000 properties and 250 buildings in San Francisco that have earned a Green Label. These properties cover more than 60 million square feet of commercial space. At least 35% of San Francisco's commercial square-footage now has a LEED or ENERGYSTAR certification.

Green Labels being recorded by the Assessor's office are U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Build It Green's Green Point Rated, Home Energy Rating System II (HERS II), Home Energy Score (US Dept of Energy) and ENERGYSTAR.

“We are making San Francisco history by including Green Labels in our official property records,” says Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting. “The Green Label information now maintained in our files is an important first step in the universal adoption of ecologically-sustainable building practices. Reducing the ecological impact of our built environment is a top priority for so many of us in San Francisco.”

The Assessor's rules for reassessment remain unchanged by this initiative and a Green Label by itself will not be used to increase assessed value of properties. There will also be no additional paperwork or filing requirements in order for a property's Green Label to be reflected in the Assessor-Recorder's files.



Assessor-Recorder Ting and Director Nutter acknowledge the importance of recording Green Labels for residential properties. Residential real estate in San Francisco – apartment buildings, condominiums, tenancies-in-common (TIC) and stand-alone single family homes – comprise the bulk of The City’s “built environment.”

"Over 53% of San Francisco's carbon emission comes from the buildings. To ward off the worst effects of climate change locally means we must tackle energy use in buildings. Recording Green Labels in the Assessor-Recorder database will provide the transparency needed to reveal high performance buildings and demonstrate leaders in the field," says Director Melanie Nutter. "Green Labels help both property owners and tenants use a common language to describe the environmental performance of buildings. Having this benchmark documented will raise the profile both of this labeling system as well as the higher performing buildings."

According to new figures released by the Assessor’s office, nearly 650 condo units are in buildings with a Green Label. The Department of Environment states more than 3,000 “residential units” (homes, condos and individual apartments) have either earned a Green Label or are in a building that has achieved one of the distinctions.

According to the Department of Environment, there are also nearly 300 homes that have completed or near completion of the San Francisco Home Improvement and Performance program (SFHIP). This initiative provides incentives and rebates for homeowners to upgrade the energy consumption and efficiency of their homes.

Build It Green and U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) will continue working with the Department of Environment and Assessor-Recorder’s office to include Green Label information in official land records.

"By improving transparency and documenting green label information for its buildings, San Francisco is taking a significant and historic step forward to advance green building," said Jason Hartke, USGBC’s vice president for national policy. "This innovative effort will spur important economic and environmental benefits to the city, ultimately helping accelerate the transition to a more efficient, high performing built environment."

Dan Geiger, Executive Director of the USGBC’s Northern California Chapter added, “Once again, San Francisco is demonstrating national leadership with this critically important Green Label program. USGBC was founded in San Francisco in 1993, and in 2011 San Francisco received the World Green Building Council’s Government Leadership Award for Excellence in City Policy for Green Building. We can take great pride in yet another milestone achievement in the green building movement.”



In a letter to San Francisco homeowners, Build It Green says “having this information ... on the official tax roll is one of the best ways to ensure that the value of your green certified home is recognized in the market.”

While no re-assessments will be triggered by earning an environmental distinction for your home, there is evidence that a Green Label enhances the re-sale value of a home.

A recent study by economists at UC Berkeley and UCLA also showed single-family homes in California sold for 9-percent more over the past 5 years than comparable homes without green labels. [http://www.builditgreen.org/files/Marketing/ValueofGreenHomeLabelsStudy_July2012.pdf]

Incorporating Green Labels into San Francisco’s official property records has been a joint effort by the Assessor-Recorder’s office, the Department of Environment and dozens of real estate leaders, architects, builders, business groups, sustainability advocates and other stakeholders.

The goal of this initiative between the Assessor-Recorder’s Office and Department of Environment is to encourage energy efficiency and other environmental performance improvements. Other goals include increasing investments in energy efficiency, and enhancing the market’s ability to value energy and environmental performance.

Adding Green Label information to the official property records also has the potential to help buyers, appraisers, and underwriters in quantifying benefits for properties and structures that earn these distinctions versus those that do not.

The Assessor-Recorder’s Office has entered Green Label information on 1,057 Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) in San Francisco. Assessor-Recorder Ting’s office also released figures on the square-footage of properties that have earned a Green Label for adopting sustainability practices.

Use Code	Total Square Footage	Number of Parcels
Commercial Hotel	4,615,108	34
Commercial Miscellaneous	1,562,070	18
Commercial Office	54,941,708	194
Commercial Retail	646,366	23
Government	14,830	17
Industrial	13,200	1
Miscellaneous	310,000	18
Multi-family	149,439	105
Condominiums	680,904	647
Grand Total	62,933,625	1057



Jerry Igra with Cornish & Carey Newmark Grubb Knight Frank commented on the impact these Green Labels have on the commercial real estate market.

“Many tenants in the commercial real estate market have adopted environmentally sustainable practices as part of their social responsibility objectives, and being located in buildings that are energy-efficient, sustainably-built, and responsibly-managed is of growing importance,” says Igra.

Mr. Igra has over 27 years of commercial real estate experience and holds a LEED AP accreditation from the US Green Building Council. LEED AP credentials certify advanced knowledge in green building as well as expertise in a particular LEED rating system. All LEED AP credential holders are required to [maintain their credential](#) through continuing education.

Cornish & Carey Newmark GKF also confirms that millions of additional square feet of commercial space in San Francisco are considered “Green Label Ready” – meaning building owners, property managers or consultants have determined what would be required to get an environmental certification for an older building and how much these upgrades would cost.

Mr. Igra suggested that such “up-front” work plays an important role in decisions to implement conservation measures that attract potential tenants or buyers.

The W San Francisco was selected as the site of the announcement because it was the first property belonging to a major hotel brand to earn LEED certification of an existing building. The W San Francisco also became only the seventh hotel in the United States to receive the Silver LEED certification for an existing building.

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