

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1398 (Rubio) – As Amended March 25, 2026

Policy Committee: Governmental Organization

Vote: 20 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes a state agency to use Green Globes certification as an alternative to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification to meet existing green building requirements.

Specifically, this bill, for a building or renovation project initiated by a state agency on or after January 1, 2027, required to obtain LEED certification, allows the project to obtain certification at Three Green Globes as an alternative to LEED Gold and Two Green Globes as an alternative to LEED Silver.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Minor and absorbable costs to the Department of General Services (DGS), which oversees state building and renovation projects.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, “This change will provide [DGS] with greater flexibility to select the certification system that is most appropriate and cost-effective for each project, while still maintaining strong sustainability standards.”
- 2) **Background. *Green Certifications.*** LEED certification is administered by two related, but distinct organizations – the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) develops and maintains the LEED rating system and the Green Business Certification Inc. is responsible for review of the project documentation, verifying compliance, and awarding certification levels.

Green Globes certification is administered by the Green Building Initiative, a singular organization that both develops standards and awards certification, unlike LEED which divides the work. The certification program is recognized by the federal government and other states and municipalities have adopted policies that include Green Globes as equivalent to LEED for various infrastructure assets.

State Building Certification. SB 416 (Laird), Chapter 395, Statutes of 2023, requires all new buildings or major renovation projects larger than 10,000 gross square feet undertaken by a state agency obtain LEED Gold or higher certification, or LEED Silver certification if the agency makes a finding that achieving LEED Gold conflicts with critical operational or security requirements, is demonstrably cost ineffective, or conflicts with California Building Code requirements. SB 416 provides that certification to an alternative equivalent or higher

rating system or standard is only acceptable when approved by DGS. This bill adds Green Globes as an allowable certification alongside LEED in statute instead of when approved by DGS.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is sponsored by the Green Building Initiative, which argues, “Explicitly including Green Globes in California statute as on par with other named green building certifications will provide for greater competition, flexibility, and cost effectiveness for state infrastructure projects required to meet green building standards.” This bill is also supported by building and contractor associations.

This bill is opposed by USGBC, which argues, “California should not bypass DGS review and *presume* that Green Globes is sufficient for a state framework tied to the state’s 2035 operational net-zero target.” This bill is also opposed by the International Living Future Institute.

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