

# The Masonry Society

## *Sustainability E-News*

### *Carbon Neutral Claims*

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#### SPONSORED EDITION

#### From The Editor

The news in this edition is dominated by stories related to embodied carbon in some fashion or another. For regular readers, this is nothing new. What is noteworthy is an article reminding us that we need to dig below the surface on claims of carbon-neutrality and the like if we really want to understand and make an impact in reducing the carbon footprint of our built environment. And while that article is focused on carbon-offsetting, the caution is appropriate for examining all types of claims, including the inappropriate comparisons of EPDs, without understanding the data and assumptions on which the claims are based. To truly make a positive impact, it's best to see the whole picture.

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#### GREEN BUILDING NEWS

As the focus on reducing carbon continues, at least one organization is challenging the authenticity of carbon-neutral claims. Carbon accounting is complex, and challenging at a minimum, and claims of carbon neutrality, whether made by a company or a class of building products, need to be examined with a critical eye. ~Tina

#### **Carbone 4: Companies can't achieve true net-zero**

##### **BLOOMBERG**

Thousands of companies are targeting net-zero and their efforts can make a difference, but the "idea of a carbon-neutral company is fundamentally dubious," asserts Carbone 4 in [this article](#). Carbone 4 identifies a few shortfalls in corporate climate targets, including that they're often based on arithmetic rather than geochemistry. Another

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issue is the use of carbon offsets, which distort the pollution rates that are the greatest barrier to global net-zero.

## Firms vow to slash concrete carbon emissions

### NEW CIVIL ENGINEER

A consortium of 17 construction companies, including Laing O'Rourke and Skanska UK, [are pledging](#) that, by 2030, half the concrete they use will produce only low CO2 emissions. Meanwhile, some engineering firms are vowing to use only zero-carbon concrete by 2050.

## Developing an embodied carbon policy reduction calculator

### CARBON LEADERSHIP FORUM

A growing number of cities are committed to tackling the urgent challenge of their built environment carbon footprint through their policies and programs. However, embodied carbon is a new policy area for many cities and the lack of city-level data on embodied carbon is a significant barrier for policymakers to gain political support and make informed decisions. The goal of developing an embodied carbon policy reduction calculator is to address these challenges.

[Read more](#) about the work in this area.

## Guide to reducing embodied carbon

### TRIMTAB (Living-Future.org)

As buildings become more energy-efficient and energy mixes become more weighted towards renewables, the upfront embodied carbon impacts from materials still account for a large portion of a building's carbon footprint and will grow in the portion of overall emissions tied to buildings. [This reference guide](#) shares some general tips on how practitioners can address embodied carbon at three key project stages: pre-design, design, and construction. It aims to share key process elements that project teams should consider at each building phase, additional resources, and examples to highlight the possibility and great potential for carbon-neutral buildings.

## CODES and STANDARDS NEWS

Most people are familiar with the LEED green building rating system, but fewer know about LEED Zero certifications. Several years ago, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) developed four certification programs focused on achieving a "Zero" rating in one specific area. The Zero certifications include Zero Energy, Zero Carbon, Zero Water, and Zero Waste. Learn more about each in the article below. ~Tina

## LEED Zero milestone highlights shift in U.S. green building practices

### CONSTRUCTION SPECIFIER

According to [this article](#), as of June 2022, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has issued nearly 100 net-zero certifications under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Zero program. These represent more than 7,000,000 m<sup>2</sup> (23,000,000 sf) of space. LEED Zero Energy certification is awarded to net-zero buildings and communities that generate as much energy as they use over the course of the year. LEED Zero Carbon recognizes net-zero carbon emissions from energy consumption through carbon emissions avoided or offset over one year. LEED Zero Water recognizes a potable water use balance of zero over one year. LEED Zero Waste recognizes buildings that achieve Green Business Certification Inc.'s (GBCI) TRUE certification at the Platinum level.



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Spec Mix

## Bronze Level

## Top States for LEED Certified Space per Capita over the Past Decade

### USGBC

USGBC publishes an annual announcement to celebrate the "Top 10 States for LEED." Now in its 12th year, the annual list is based on the gross square footage of LEED-certified space per capita added in each state over the past year, using U.S. Census data. See the [2021 report](#).

## Green Globes marks milestone in green commercial space certification

### CONSTRUCTION SPECIFIER

The Green Building Initiative (GBI) recently awarded Minneapolis, Minnesota's IDS Center office skyscraper a Three Green Globes certification, pushing the total commercial space with the certification to more than 4.6 million m<sup>2</sup> (500 million sf). [Read more](#).

## GREEN PRODUCT NEWS

So-called green procurement is expanding globally. Such policies focus on procuring (specifying/purchasing) building products that are environmentally preferable in some aspect. Some policies have multiple criteria for designating what is 'green'. Others focus only on embodied carbon. You can read more about who is doing what in the article linked below. ~Tina

## Ariz. Masonry Council and LAST Architects demonstrate prefab masonry

### CONCRETE PRODUCTS

The Arizona Masonry Council and LAST Architects used parametric modeling tools to design unique masonry arches which were then built in the World of Concrete Masonry Pavilion. Eleven hundred six-inch units donated by Arizona-based AZ Best Block were used in the construction of the pavilion's arches. Each tensioned, prefabricated arch segment used 88 units.. Read more [here](#).

## Karbonite finalizing report on new SCM

### GLOBAL CEMENT

According to [this article](#), Karbonite UK is preparing a final report for a major cement producer on its Karbonite product, which uses new mineral feedstocks and a biomass waste stream to create a more environmentally friendly cement manufacturing process. The company says Karbonite ground with 50% clinker results in a cement with the same compressive strength as ordinary portland cement.

## Report lists countries prioritizing green procurement

### GLOBAL CEMENT

A joint report from the World Economic Forum, the Global Cement and Concrete Association, and Boston Consulting Group has identified the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, France, the UK, and certain US states as public entities prioritizing green procurement. [The report](#), which offers a framework for how the identified governments are leading in the procurement of concrete and construction, says governments play a crucial role by establishing reporting standards, procurement policies, and building codes. Read more about it [here](#).

## EDUCATIONAL NEWS

### Coming Soon! TMS Annual Meeting

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Join us October 12-15, 2022 at the Sonesta Denver Downtown Hotel in Denver, CO for The Masonry Society's Annual Meeting. The meeting will feature Educational Sessions and an Awards Luncheon, as well as Society business and committee meetings (including TMS 402/602 meetings). It's a great opportunity to network with, and learn from, other masonry professionals. For more information, and registration information (coming soon!) visit <https://masonrysociety.org/meetings/2022-annual-meeting/>.

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