



June 6, 2008

## **PROJECT INITIATION & NOTIFICATION and CALL FOR COMMENTS: Provisional Revisions to Green Seal™ Environmental Standard for Lodging Properties, GS-33**

Since it issued its Environmental Standard for Lodging Properties, GS-33, in 1999, Green Seal, Inc., has certified many lodging properties in a number of states. The standard was revised in minor ways twice, and it remains a leadership standard that challenges the lodging industry to operate more sustainably.

However, in a number of green lodging projects Green Seal has participated in since 2001, where a state or city sponsors the certification of properties in its jurisdiction, Green Seal has noticed a continuing challenge for many properties – even those otherwise committed to sustainable operations and ostensibly at the leadership level in environmental performance – to meet the requirements of GS-33 in the context of their everyday business activities. Concomitantly during this period, several state green lodging programs have been developed, at least one with Green Seal's assistance, and in most of these programs there are at least two levels of recognition for sustainable performance, usually with an entry level for basic sustainable practices.

After reviewing its Green Lodging Program and the progress it has made over the years, Green Seal has decided to propose a provisional revision of GS-33 primarily **to enable properties to be certified at three different levels to reflect the range of performance** and the difficulty in achieving a high level of sustainability in the industry. The main change being proposed is to incorporate in GS-33 an entry level of challenging but more readily achievable requirements, comprising a subset of the criteria that is selected from the existing standard. The second level comprises all the criteria currently in GS-33, while a third, elite level has been added to recognize and reward truly outstanding environmental performance.

Green Seal believes that, even with these three levels incorporating an entry level of fewer requirements than the existing standard, the proposed standard still reflects and identifies environmental leadership in the lodging industry today. The entry level contains some of the core requirements in GS-33 that must be met by any property striving for leadership in sustainability. The reduced number of criteria should, however, make attainment of the entry level more practical for properties, which are always burdened with the press of everyday business. In addition, properties certified at the entry level must move to the next level (meeting all requirements of the existing standard) within one year of initial certification.

**The proposed revision is designated as provisional because it is intended primarily to re-structure GS-33 into the three tiers, but it does not attempt to review and revise the standard comprehensively.** That more complete revision will be attempted after the re-structured program has a chance to operate. Green Seal is, however, proposing some minor, mostly clarifying changes in the current criteria in this proposal, where appropriate.

Properties currently certified under GS-33 will automatically be re-designated as certified at the second level. Certification to the different levels will all use the basic Green Seal Certification Mark, along with appropriate text and/or additional graphics designating each level. Green Seal is still evaluating the appropriate designations for the tiers and may decide to use a different classification system than the levels proposed here, such as silver/gold/platinum. Green Seal invites suggestions on the most comprehensible and useful ways of designating the three tiers of certification.

**The Proposed Revised Standard is open for comment until August 11, 2008.** No additional comments will be accepted after this date.

To post comments on the on-line forum, one must register to use the forum. All users will be able to view all the comments and the name of the commenter. Forum user registration is open to all interested parties until the deadline. To register as a user and access the forum:

- Get on the following URL: <http://green-seal.org/standards>
- Register an account; for the username please use first initial and full last name (e.g., G Seal); select "GS-33 Lodging Properties"; review the disclaimer information; click Register.
- You should receive a welcome email from the Green Seal Development Forum within one business day.

Areas for commenting:

- General comments
- Tiering structure
- Entry tier requirements
- Top tier requirements
- Names of tiers

*(If you provide comments on the criteria of the standard, they will be deferred until that revision is taken up)*

There is a User Tips and a Help section available once you log in to the forum to help address questions on how to use the online forum as well as general guidelines and rules on posting comments and attachments. Green Seal has administrative rights to the forum to ensure proper use of the online forum.

Green Seal will also accept comments by email, fax and postal mail. Any comments received by postal mail, fax and email will be posted to the online forum by Green Seal staff. Such comments will be viewable by forum participants by the name of the commenter. Please refer to specific sections on which you have comments, include copies of any supporting documentation, and send your comments to:

Green Seal, Inc.

Attn: GS-33 Provisional Revision

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 827

Washington, DC 20036

Or by fax: (202) 872-4324 (please fax no more than 10 pages)

Or by e-mail: [standards@greenseal.org](mailto:standards@greenseal.org) subject "Comments on GS-33 Provisional Revision"

Contact Green Seal for information: [standards@greenseal.org](mailto:standards@greenseal.org)

Information on this project can be found at the Green Seal web site:

[http://www.greenseal.org/certification/g33\\_lodging.cfm](http://www.greenseal.org/certification/g33_lodging.cfm)