



August 5<sup>th</sup> 2011

Mr. Paul Rowland  
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Suite B500  
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To whom it may concern,

This letter is being submitted in support of George Mason University's STARS documentation for an innovation credit. I believe they deserve special recognition as the driving force behind the first LEED Gold certified Hotel in Virginia.

In 2007, George Mason University's (Mason) Board of Visitors pledged that all of Mason new buildings will be designed and built to a minimum of US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standard. Mason's first LEED building designed and completed after that commitment was the Mason Inn. Although they were originally targeting Silver Mason demonstrated their commitment to sustainability and pushed hard for the additional points need to get to the Gold level of certification. As a result Mason Inn is proud to be the first LEED Gold Conference Center and Hotel in Virginia. The Mason Inn opened in July 2010 and received its LEED Gold certification shortly after in December 2010.

The design and construction team at Mason Inn worked diligently to incorporate many sustainable design and operational practices not often seen on Mason's campus or in a hotel for that matter. A significant portion of the spaces regularly occupied by guests and staff (90%) are flooded with daylight, reducing the buildings energy consumptions. The building materials were carefully selected to have an exceptional amount of recycled content (30%), to be sourced locally (30%), and to be rapidly renewable (5%). The building also developed a comprehensive green housekeeping program where 90% of its products were green certified; modified the building managers' standard customer survey to include sustainability questions; an in-room recycling program; and a transparent integrated pest management program that communicated to employees and guests if the hotel was applying pesticides.

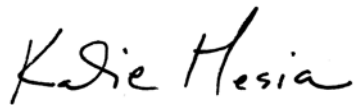
Mason Inn looked at sustainability from all angles. They incorporated standard sustainability practices in its design and operations in many ways, here are some examples:

- Use of energy efficient lighting
- Water saving devices

- Use of lighting motion sensors in offices, storerooms, and public areas
- Washing towels and bed linens on guest demand
- Use of recycled paper products
- Use of uniforms from recycled or recyclable material for team members
- Implemented paperless communications throughout the entire hotel and conference center --Use of sugar cane based food to-go containers
- Use of suggested seafood from the Monterrey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program
- Use of fresh herbs from our Executive Chef's Garden
- Use of thermal pots and shuttles for coffee service
- Food, wine, and other products are purchased locally or domestically
- Energy conservation practices
- Sustainable tabletop decor in all food outlets
- Each guestroom has a welcome packet that informs the guest about Mason Inn's sustainability commitment

As you can see the construction of Mason Inn as the first LEED building on Mason's campus prompted a green sea change for the University. They have stretched well beyond a typical client fully embracing green into all of their decision making process. They deserve to be recognized for their innovation.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Mesia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Mesia BD+C  
Regional Director of Sustainability