

Why Look for the NGBS Green Certified Mark? **by Cindy Wasser, Home Innovation Research Labs**

So you're looking for a new home or apartment? You've have heard all the positive things about green homes—the low energy costs, low-maintenance features, healthier living environment, etc.—but you may wonder if a green certified home is within your price-point and able to “live” up to the hype. You also may be unsure how to validate a builder's claims regarding green features in a home. When searching for quality and green performance, look no further than the NGBS Green Certified mark.

The National Green Building Standard (NGBS) is the only green building rating system for homes and apartments approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), as an American National Standard. ANSI approval of the NGBS is important because it means that the NGBS was developed with full input and review from numerous building science experts nationwide. The NGBS provides a blueprint for builders to follow for the design and construction of new and renovated single-family homes and multifamily apartment buildings. NGBS certification through Home Innovation Research Labs, an independent, third-party certification agency, continues to lead the home building industry in its affordability, rigorous performance criteria, and flexibility to fit all types of home construction and all market needs.

NGBS Green Certification goes well beyond saying a home is energy efficient. It provides independent, third-party verification that a new or remodeled home, apartment building, or land development is designed and built to achieve high performance in six key areas: Site Design, Resource Efficiency, Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Building Operation & Maintenance. A comprehensive, balanced approach to incorporating green measures is critical to ensure that the home operates at an optimal performance level. For example, a very energy efficient home with a tight building envelop can have unintended moisture and air quality issues if the builder has not also incorporated practices to manage moisture and reduce indoor pollutants.

Each home or apartment certified by Home Innovation Labs as NGBS Green Certified undergoes two inspections by a third-party, independent professional to confirm proper installation of all green products and practices within the home. Home Innovation reviews every single verification report to ensure it is complete and accurate before the NGBS certification is issued. In the end, your NGBS Green Certified home is not only a higher performing home, but for many buyers it is a higher quality home than a standard code-minimum home because of the rigorous inspection protocol it must pass to receive the certification mark.

Surveys have found that owners of green certified homes are satisfied with the overall quality, efficiency, and low-maintenance aspects of their homes. In a recent survey of NGBS Green Certified homeowners, the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) and GuildQuality, a leading provider of customer satisfaction research, found that a

remarkable 94% would recommend a green home to a friend and 92% would purchase another green home!

Doesn't a green home cost more? Not necessarily. Many builders report they can build and certify new NGBS Green homes for little or no additional cost. There are certainly some green building practices and products that cost more than conventional construction due to the fact that the products offer high-quality (like higher R-Value insulation) or more advanced technology (higher efficiency HVAC systems). However, these practices and products also can significantly reduce utility bills and be much more cost-effective for homeowners in the mid- and long-term. Other green practices cost less than conventional practices both upfront and over the long-term, such as pre-stained building products. Living in an NGBS Green Certified home can reduce the time and money you spend operating and maintaining your home.

Bonus—green certification may positively influence the appraisal value of your home and/or make you eligible to receive financial incentives from a local government agency. NGBS Green certification is officially recognized in the Appraisal Institute's Addendum for Green and Energy Efficient features and is a listed attribute in many local Multiple Listing Services. In some places, like Delaware, buyers of new green certified homes receive multi-year cash rebates for making an environmentally-responsible purchasing decision.

Want more information? Visit www.homeinnovation.com/GreenLiving.

Find your NGBS Green Certified home at www.HomeInnovation.com/FindYourGreenHome.

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