



## American Center for Life Cycle Assessment

Institute for Environmental Research and Education

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D'Lane Wisner  
2304 Oxford Hills Dr  
Raleigh, NC 27608

Dear Mr. Wisner:

I am the Secretary for the American Center for Life Cycle Assessment, the professional society for Life cycle Assessment in the U.S.

Life Cycle Assessment is the science of measuring the environmental impact of products and services. The first LCA was published in 1969, and LCA degrees are now available in universities around the world. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of LCA studies have been performed in the last 40 years, with the annual number increasing every year. ACLCA provides a certification for LCA professionals, similar to the PE certification. LCA is imbedded in many environmental laws and regulations around the world. LCA practice is standardized through ISO standards (the ISO 14040 series) and there are also many other LCA standards to be found in both European (CEN) and American (ASTM) standardization bodies. Standardization around buildings and construction especially provides a rich documentation of LCA practice.

The value of life cycle assessment is that it is a systems analysis tool that covers the full range of environmental impacts over the life cycle of the product, from cradle to grave. There is no other environmental assessment tool that has this broad scope: it permits one to assure that improving environmental performance in one part of the product life cycle does not cause environmental degradation elsewhere.

Recently, the use of LCA for ecolabels has become quite popular. For example, product carbon footprints are becoming commonplace. A carbon footprint is an LCA that only looks at climate change issues. More generally, environmental product declarations (EPDs) are LCA based ecolabels that cover the full range of relevant environmental issues. The French government has passed a law that will require EPDs on every consumer product sold in France. The European Commission shows every intention of following the French approach. Literally millions of LCAs will need to be performed to meet these legal requirements. EPDs provide purchasers with the information they need to make an informed, holistic environmental choice.

In summary, LCA is an environmental systems analysis tool that has been developed over decades. The level of professionalism in the field is rising, and the use of LCA in ecolabeling programs is becoming commonplace.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Regards,

Rita Schenck, Ph.D. LCACP  
Secretary, ACLCA

The American Center for Life Cycle Assessment is a program of the  
Institute for Environmental Research and Education

