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## What is Buy Clean Competitiveness?

- The National Precast Concrete Association has established the Buy Clean Competitiveness Committee to address environmental concerns within the precast concrete industry. This committee focuses on educating members about sustainable practices and compliance with emerging environmental standards.

### Key areas of emphasis include:

- **Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs):** Providing guidance on developing EPDs, which are independently verified documents that disclose a product's environmental impact throughout its lifecycle. EPDs are becoming increasingly important as federal and state agencies implement carbon-related standards requiring such documentation for construction materials.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Promoting methods to reduce the environmental footprint of precast plants, such as energy conservation, recycling initiatives, responsible material procurement and carbon capture techniques.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Assisting members in navigating and adhering to environmental regulations, including stormwater and air pollution prevention measures.

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## What are EPDs?

- Environmental Product Declarations are standardized, independently verified documents that provide transparent information about the environmental impact of a product throughout its life cycle. They follow international standards and are used to assess sustainability in industries like construction, manufacturing and consumer goods.

### Key Aspects of EPDs:

- **Life Cycle Assessment:** EPDs summarize the environmental impact of a product, including raw material extraction, production, transportation, use and end-of-life disposal or recycling.
- **Transparency & Comparability:** They allow buyers, regulators and industry professionals to compare different products' environmental impacts objectively.
- **Third-Party Verification:** EPDs must be verified by an independent body to ensure credibility and compliance with regulations.
- **Key Metrics:** They often include information on carbon footprint, water usage, energy consumption and emissions.

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## EPDs in the precast concrete Industry:

- For precast concrete, EPDs help contractors and policymakers comply with Buy Clean policies, which aim to reduce the carbon footprint of public infrastructure projects by prioritizing low-emission materials.
- The NPCA has been proactive in developing EPDs to promote sustainability within the precast concrete industry.

- These EPDs provide standardized environmental impact data, enabling architects, engineers and builders to make informed decisions when selecting materials for construction projects. By utilizing EPDs, stakeholders can assess the environmental performance of precast concrete products, facilitating comparisons and supporting sustainable building practices.
- For precast concrete producers interested in developing their own EPDs, NPCA offers guidance on the process. This includes conducting a Life Cycle Assessment to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with all stages of a product's life, from raw material extraction through manufacturing and beyond. The resulting data is then compiled into an EPD, which must be independently verified to ensure accuracy and credibility.
- By embracing EPDs, the precast concrete industry demonstrates a commitment to transparency and environmental stewardship, aligning with global trends toward sustainable construction practices.

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## What are the financial opportunities of going green and having an EPD?

### ● Increased Market Competitiveness & Revenue Growth

- Many government agencies and large corporations now require low-carbon materials in their projects due to Buy Clean policies.
- LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and other green certifications favor materials with EPDs, making precast products more attractive to green construction projects.
- Having EPDs can differentiate your business from competitors, opening doors to higher-value contracts.

### ● Access to Government Incentives & Grants

- Many federal, state and local governments offer tax incentives, grants and subsidies for businesses that invest in sustainable manufacturing and low-carbon products.
- Infrastructure funding programs increasingly prioritize projects using materials with documented lower environmental impact.

### ● Cost Savings Through Efficiency Improvements

- Conducting a Life Cycle Assessment as part of EPD development often uncovers energy waste, material inefficiencies and cost-saving opportunities.
- Investing in renewable energy, recycling and optimized material usage can lower operating costs over time.

### ● Risk Mitigation & Compliance Advantages

- More regulations are emerging that penalize high-carbon materials; having EPDs ensures compliance and reduces the risk of being excluded from future projects.
- Early adoption of green practices prepares businesses for stricter environmental policies.

### ● Enhanced Brand Reputation & Customer Loyalty

- Consumers and businesses increasingly prefer sustainable products.
- Companies that proactively adopt green practices and publicize their EPDs benefit from positive brand recognition and stronger customer trust.

### ● Investor & Financial Market Benefits

- Sustainable businesses are more attractive to institutional investors, and banks offering green financing.
- Many lenders now offer lower interest rates on loans for environmentally responsible businesses.



## ● Higher Resale & Asset Value

- Facilities that integrate energy-efficient processes and sustainable production often have higher property values and greater appeal to buyers or investors.
- By investing in green practices and EPD certification, precast concrete manufacturers can unlock financial growth opportunities, cost savings and long-term market advantages.

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## How does having an EPD/going green attract younger employees? Specifically Genz.

### ● Gen Z Prefers Environmentally Responsible Employers

- Sustainability is a top concern for Gen Z, with surveys showing that nearly 75% prefer to work for a company that cares about the environment.
- Companies with EPDs demonstrate transparency and a commitment to sustainability, making them more appealing to young job seekers.

### ● Aligns with Their Values and Purpose-Driven Work

- Gen Z is highly purpose-driven and want to contribute to meaningful, sustainable projects.
- If a company promotes green manufacturing and low-carbon materials, it provides a sense of impact and fulfillment that younger employees seek.

### ● Boosts Employer Branding & Recruitment Appeal

- Companies with strong sustainability initiatives stand out in recruitment marketing and job fairs.
- Highlighting EPDs and green certifications in career pages, job descriptions, and social media attracts younger talent who actively seek eco-friendly employers.

### ● Encourages Innovation & Digital Transformation

- Gen Z values innovation and technology. Companies that embrace technology become more attractive to Gen Z engineers, designers and operations professionals.

### ● Creates a Positive, Engaging Work Environment

- Sustainability initiatives (such as waste reduction programs, recycling efforts or energy-efficient plant upgrades) create hands-on engagement opportunities.
- Offering eco-friendly workspaces, volunteer days for environmental causes, or sustainability training can increase employee satisfaction and reduce turnover.

### ● Helps with Retention & Job Satisfaction

- Younger employees are more likely to stay at a company if they believe in its mission.
- Investing in sustainability training, green job roles and professional development can help retain Gen Z employees.

### ● Appeals to Sustainability-Focused Academic Programs

- Many colleges and universities now emphasize sustainability in engineering, business and construction programs.
  - Companies that promote EPDs and green practices can build stronger relationships with universities for internships and recruitment.
- By integrating EPDs and green business practices, companies in the precast concrete industry can attract top young talent, boost employee engagement and remain competitive in a changing workforce landscape.

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## Case study about how having an EPD landed a company work:

- Implementing Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) has enabled precast concrete manufacturers to secure projects by demonstrating their commitment to sustainability and transparency. A notable example is Heidelberg Materials Precast Abetong, a Swedish company specializing in prefabricated concrete elements.
- By developing accurate EPDs and conducting comprehensive Life Cycle Assessments, Heidelberg Materials Precast Abetong effectively reduced the carbon footprint of their concrete products. This proactive approach not only showcased their dedication to environmental responsibility but also provided a competitive edge in the market. As a result, the company successfully won contracts where clients prioritized sustainability metrics. Development Engineer Andreas Lid emphasized the significance of EPDs in their success, stating, “Some projects we have won because we had the best EPDs and were able to provide answers surrounding them.”
- This case illustrates how adopting EPDs can enhance a company's market position, particularly as the construction industry increasingly values environmental transparency and reduced carbon footprints.



### SOURCES:

1. Heidelberg Materials' concrete carbon reduction with accurate EPDs
2. Data
3. Environmental Product Declarations NPCA
4. How to Get Started with an Environmental Product Declaration NPCA
5. Government Insights: Advocating for the Precast Concrete Industry NPCA
6. NPCA, PCI, CPCI pen Environmental Product Declarations in principal categories - Concrete Products



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