



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

Support the *Timber Innovation Act*

The *Timber Innovation Act* (S. 538 and H.R. 1380) was introduced to create opportunities to use wood products, including mass timber, in the construction of tall wood buildings.

Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Jim Risch (R-ID), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Susan Collins (R-ME), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Steve Daines (R-MT) Angus King (I-ME), Gary Peters (D-MI) and Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced the Senate bill. The House bill was introduced by Reps. Suzan DelBene (D-WA), Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA), Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Cathy McMorris-Rodgers (R-WA), Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH), Bruce Westerman (R-AR), Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Ralph Abraham (R-LA), Kurt Schrader (D-OR), Steven Palazzo (R-MS), Rick Larsen (D-WA), Gregg Harper (R-MS), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Trent Kelly (R-MS) and Peter Welch (D-VT).

The Timber Innovation Act will:

- Establish performance driven research and development program for advancing tall wood building construction in the United States;
- Authorize the Tall Wood Building Prize Competition through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) annually for the next five years;
- Create federal grants to support state, local, university and private sector education, outreach, research and development, including education and assistance for architects and builders, that will accelerate the use of wood in tall buildings;
- Authorize technical assistance for USDA, in cooperation with state foresters and state extension directors (or equivalent state officials), to implement a program of education and technical assistance for mass timber applications; and
- Incentivize the retrofitting of existing facilities located in areas with high unemployment rates, to spur job creation in rural areas.

Innovation creates jobs and expands markets

Tall wood building construction has existed in Canada and Europe for years. Advancing the construction of tall wood buildings will help reduce the costs and increase the economic benefits of building construction. Wood building construction directly supports jobs in areas of rural America that have yet to recover from the recession. Mills are large drivers of the rural economies and expanded markets will help to bolster and grow these economies. Increased construction of tall wood buildings in urban areas will also increase jobs in the construction industry and the construction trades.

This legislation will also help keep families, who own and care for a large portion of U.S. forests and supply a majority of the timber we use, on the land and help them keep their land in forest. In this respect, it is an incredibly powerful forest conservation strategy.

Wood is the obvious green building material

The rise of green building practices means more attention on how our country's buildings impact the environment. The "Timber Innovation Act" would enhance the opportunities for the construction of buildings that will have the lowest environmental impact. Recognizing that wood, among the major construction materials, provides the lowest life-cycle impact, policymakers have increasingly turned their attention to using it more (along with tall wood) to lessen the environmental burdens associated with the building sector.

Wood reduces the building's environmental footprint

Wood products store carbon absorbed by trees during their growth cycle, keeping it out of the atmosphere indefinitely. Using wood in place of fossil fuel-intensive materials also avoids most of the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted during the manufacturing of such products. A White House Domestic Policy Council blog post said, "By some estimates, the near term use of [mass timber] and other emerging wood technologies in buildings 7-15 stories could have the same emissions control affect as taking more than 2 million cars off the road for one year."

Structural integrity of tall wood buildings

Model building codes developed by the International Code Council, guided by building and fire officials from all over the country, have established extensive requirements for safe construction. All building materials used in construction must meet minimum provisions of building codes adopted by state or local jurisdictions. All buildings constructed to meet those codes can be expected to have similar performance in terms of safety. Mass timber products, which would be used in tall wood buildings, resist the effects of fire through charring of the outer layer and insulate the unburned wood at the core, thereby maintaining strength and giving occupants more time to leave the building. Mass timber structures also have minimal concealed spaces within floor and wall assemblies, which reduce the risk that a fire will spread unnoticed. One of wood's characteristics is that it can carry substantially greater maximum loads for short durations, as is the case during high wind and seismic events.

The Timber Innovation Act WILL NOT:

- Pick "winners over losers." TIA does not mandate the use of specific products, but rather promotes research and technical assistance to state, local, university and private sector education and architects to help familiarize them with the possibilities of building mass timber buildings, all of which will provide benefit to the U.S. economy. Other building material industries have received millions in federal funding over the past several decades from numerous federal agencies.
- Allow "double dipping" of federal government resources. There is an appropriate role the U.S. government plays in supporting research and development for all basic industries, and non-wood industries continue to receive significant federal funding for research and development. Commodity check-off programs, including the Softwood Lumber Board, are essentially marketing support programs. Under a check-off, funds are collected from the participating industry and are used to promote that particular commodity. **No federal funds are used to support check-off programs.** Further, the lumber check-off program can NOT direct USDA and its state foresters and state extension directors (or equivalent state officials) to undertake programs that are already under its authority or to implement and provide programs of education and technical assistance for mass timber applications as called for in the legislation.

- Promote deforestation. U.S. forests are sustainably managed while demand for forest products increases. According to USDA data, the total volume of trees growing in U.S. forests has increased 50% since 1953.
- Promote unsafe construction. Model building codes are developed and adopted by the International Code Council (ICC), whose voting members are building and fire officials from all over the country. These materials must meet those requirements of established building codes adopted by state or local jurisdictions and buildings constructed to meet those codes can be expected to have similar performance in terms of safety.