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State Foresters Call on Green Building Sector to Drive Economic Growth through Wood Use
New USDA Forest Service Report Documents Environmental Benefits of Wood

Washington, DC, September 30, 2011 – The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) applauded a new report from the USDA Forest Service showing that wood is superior to other construction materials in terms of environmental benefits.

The report, *“Science Supporting the Economic and Environmental Benefits of Using Wood and Wood Products in Green Building Construction,”* cites research and findings such as:

- Wood is superior to competing products in terms of fossil fuel consumption, contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, and quantities of solid waste produced.
- It takes 15% less total energy to manufacture houses with wood-based walls.

Research is one component of the pro-wood green building policy announced by USDA Secretary Vilsack on March 30, 2011. The policy also directs the USDA Forest Service to preferentially select wood in new building construction and demonstrate the use of wood as a green building material.

“State Foresters appreciate Secretary Vilsack’s commitment to enhancing research and development projects using green building materials,” said Arkansas State Forester and NASF President John T. Shannon. “We encourage USDA to support green building standards that use life-cycle analysis to choose building designs and materials, as recommended in the report.”

There is a well-established scientific understanding that wood products use less energy and provide greater environmental benefits than alternative building materials. The report’s recommendations calling for the development and use of life-cycle analysis in building codes alongside technology transfer activities targeted at engineers, architects, and other building professionals will help promote wood as a green building material, but are not all that is needed. Sustainable markets provide landowners with more options for addressing regeneration and forest health needs. By embracing the findings of this report and favoring wood, green building markets can significantly advance sustainability goals that extend well beyond the forest.

“Trees are our greatest renewable resource and economic asset. Both the Forest Service and the green building industry can contribute to the nation’s economic challenges by increasing wood utilization. This can be done in a manner that produces net environmental benefits. If green buildings are the goal, wood is the answer,” said NASF Executive Director Jay Farrell.

The report Forest Service report is consistent with many of the statements found in NASF’s 2008 resolution on green building that recognized the value of wood from certified, sustainably managed U.S. forests as a green building material. Visit www.stateforesters.org/resolution/green-building for more information.

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of state and territorial forestry agencies and the District of Columbia. NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources. <http://www.stateforesters.org>

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