

NASF RESOLUTION 2013-1: Green Building

ORIGIN OF RESOLUTION:

NASF Forest Markets Committee

NASF Forest Resource Management Committee

ISSUE OF CONCERN: Green Building and the Role of Wood Products

BACKGROUND:

WHEREAS buildings are a significant source of energy consumption and CO₂ emissions; accounting for one-third to one-half of the energy expended in the United States; and

WHEREAS the materials used in building construction can have a significant effect on a building's environmental footprint; and

WHEREAS sustainable or green architecture can help to substantially reduce the negative impacts on the environment and improve the quality of life for people using these buildings; and

WHEREAS studies have shown that green buildings can actually help save money in the long-term; and

WHEREAS the ability of wood to store carbon is recognized internationally by climate scientists and policymakers, including the most recent guidelines from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; and

WHEREAS the Consortium for Research on Renewable Industrial Materials (CORRIM), consisting of research programs at 15 universities, found that (1) manufacturing wood products uses less overall energy than production of concrete and steel building products, and causes fewer air and water impacts, (2) wood sequesters carbon more effectively than these other building materials, (3) wood has insulating characteristics that conserve energy when compared with other materials, (4) when wood used in construction reaches the end of its useful life, it can be burned to displace fossil fuels, and (5) due to the combination of these factors, the use of wood-framing in buildings results in the generation of 26% lower CO₂ emissions than is the case with steel-framing, and 31% lower than concrete; and

WHEREAS the use of sustainably-produced, domestically-grown wood products substantially lowers the consumption of energy for transportation compared to wood produced overseas, and helps maintain the manufacturing base in many local economies; and

WHEREAS it is in the interest of the citizens of the United States to maintain healthy forest economies in order to keep our private forests from being converted to other non-forest uses; and

WHEREAS the standards of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) are each accepted by a significant segment of the U.S. wood market as providing credible evidence that wood certified through the program comes from responsibly managed forests; and

WHEREAS the forestlands of the United States vary greatly in terms of ecological character and ownership, and these differences require different approaches to forest certification; and

WHEREAS competition among forestland certification systems benefits consumers, wood suppliers, and the forests themselves; and

WHEREAS the United States has a solid foundation of environmental laws and an educated and professional workforce that collectively distinguish wood from U.S. forests from other parts of the world; and

WHEREAS most publicly owned, actively managed forests in the United States are managed in accordance with principles of sustainable forest management, and this provides substantial assurances that the wood, whether certified or not, comes from well managed forests; and

WHEREAS multiple green building standards, including the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes standard, the National Association of Home Builders' National Green Building Standard, and the U.S. Green Buildings Council's LEED rating system, are accepted by a significant segment of the U.S. building market; and

WHEREAS the existence of multiple green building standards promotes competition between and improvement of existing standards, allows for the creation of new standards, and enables public and private institutions, and private individuals, to choose the most environmentally beneficial standard or rating system for their circumstances and projects; and

WHEREAS from both environmental and economic perspectives it is important that wood products, and particularly products derived from U.S. forests, play a substantial role in the U.S. green building movement.

WHEREAS this resolution was developed and approved by the National Association of State Foresters in 2008; and

WHEREAS this resolution was reviewed by the National Association of State Foresters in September 2013; and

WHEREAS this resolution and issues addressed in it are still current and of high importance to the forestry community;

RESOLUTION:

Therefore, be it resolved by the National Association of State Foresters that we:

- (1) Endorse the use of sustainable or green architecture within the United States for residential, commercial, and public buildings, and urge private entities and governmental entities at the federal, state, and local levels that sponsor, fund, or regulate building construction to adopt policies that encourage the use of green building standards; and
- (2) Recognize the value of multiple green building standards that respond to the needs of diverse segments of the building industry, including standards currently recognized by the marketplace and other credible systems that may emerge in the future; and
- (3) Urge organizations that maintain green building standards to define their standards so as to fully recognize the value of wood in green building construction. Standards should:
 - (a) fully incorporate life-cycle analysis into the evaluation of the environmental performance of building materials,
 - (b) recognize the value of wood as an environmentally friendly building material produced from a renewable resource, with added benefits justified based on life-cycle analysis,
 - (c) recognize the value of domestically grown wood and wood products in comparison with wood from many parts of the world because (1) forestry practices in the U.S. compare favorably with those in many other parts of the world, (2) transportation-related emissions are far lower, and (3) use of domestic wood supports local economies, which, in turn, encourages retention of forestlands rather than conversion to other uses,
 - (d) recognize the value of U.S. wood that is certified by a credible forestland certification standard as having been grown in a sustainable manner, keeping in mind that there are multiple certification standards and systems that are credible and nationally recognized, and that the diversity of U.S. forestlands requires the use of multiple forestland certification standards and systems, and
 - (e) recognize the value of U.S. wood from public lands that are managed in accordance with the principles of sustainable forest management regardless of whether the land is certified.

NASF ACTION:

- Approved
- Disapproved
- Tabled

DATE OF ACTION: 9/26/2013