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SENATE, HOUSE INTRODUCE TIMBER INNOVATION ACT



Manufacturing of cross-laminated timber. Photo: D.R. Johnson Wood Innovations

Washington, D.C. — The Senate and House introduced the “Timber Innovation Act” to the support of the American Wood Council (AWC), American Forest Foundation (AFF), Binational Softwood Lumber Council (BSLC), National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) and Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (SLMA).

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) and Peter Welch (D-VT).

The bills would:

- establish a 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;



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- 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 from 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.

“Mass timber buildings have existed for centuries, from Japanese wood pagodas built in the 7th century that still stand to the North American heavy timber structures that have stood for the last 100 years,” said AWC President and CEO Robert Glowinski. “The United States has an opportunity to bring new, sustainable mass timber technology to our construction industry, and the Timber Innovation Act directs technical assistance and research components already in place. Building construction using wood and mass timber products directly supports jobs in areas of rural America that have yet to recover from the recession and would lessen our dependence on fossil-fuel intensive alternatives, so having the federal government encourage further development of this emerging construction technology stands to benefit and enhance both infrastructure development and putting people to work. AWC thanks all of the cosponsors for leading on the Timber Innovation Act.”

Tom Martin, AFF president and CEO, said, “Hardworking families and individuals own and care for more than one-third of U.S forests. These families rely on markets for their timber to stay on the land and to afford to practice the stewardship needed to deliver the clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and products Americans use every day. Thanks to leaders in the House and Senate, this legislation directs research and development that will open forest market opportunities, create jobs and rural economic growth, and support millions of families across rural America.”

“Mass timber technology is revolutionizing and disrupting the way buildings are being built around the world,” said Cees de Jager, BSLC general manager. “Unfortunately, the United States has been trailing other markets in this regard. The Timber Innovation Act will significantly contribute to enhancing our industry’s ability to close the knowledge gap and stimulate private sector investment that supports manufacturing and job growth in rural communities, optimizes the construction process and regains our leadership position.”

“We applaud the members of Congress who co-sponsored the Timber Innovation Act bill and encourage others to sign on,” said Valerie Johnson, president and CEO of D.R. Johnson Wood Innovations. “As the nation’s first certified manufacturer of cross-laminated timber, my team has worked with architects, engineers and researchers to pioneer mass timber construction in the U.S. We’re proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish thus far and know that focused investment in this emerging sector can be a game changer. Mass timber construction can drive the green building revolution of the 21st century and catalyze job creation in rural areas.”

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PCA: ‘Timber Innovation Act’ is anti-competitive government

The Portland Cement Association (PCA) urged Congress to reject the “Timber Innovation Act” introduced this week in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

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