



Tall Wood Buildings

Issue

The House and Senate have introduced nearly identical “Timber Innovation Act” bills (**S 2892** and **HR 5628**). The legislation would create opportunities to use wood products, including mass timber, in the construction of so-called tall wood buildings. The proposals define “tall wood building” as those that are designed to be over 85 feet high.

Background

Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) introduced S. 2892; Representatives Suzan DelBene (D-WA), Glenn Thompson (R-PA), Derek Kilmer (D-WA) and Cathy McMorris-Rodgers (R-WA) introduced the House companion version of the bill. The Hardwood Federation was instrumental in securing the co-sponsorship of Congressman Thompson. The legislation would do the following:

- 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;
- Codify the Forest Service’s Wood Innovation Grant program and expand it to facilitate Centers of Excellence and provide grants to states to fund education, outreach, research and development, including education and assistance for architects and builders, which will accelerate the use of wood in tall buildings.
- Additionally, the House bill (H.R. 5628) has an additional provision which would incentivize the retrofitting of existing facilities located in areas with high unemployment rates.

This legislation would have the most direct impact on softwood and Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) interests as it is focused on internal structures. The fact is that wood has been losing market share in this building segment for years and enactment of this legislation would be helpful in regaining at least some traction for wood as a building material of choice in taller structures. Beyond that, the Hardwood Federation is supportive as the bills support our message that wood is a safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly building material. Lower grade hardwoods are also potential raw materials for CLT technology and this potential should be explored and supported.

Hardwood Federation Position

The Hardwood Federation supports passage of the Timber Innovation Act and encourages Congress to take up this legislation as soon as possible. We will continue to support our forest products allies leading the charge in Congress, including the American Forest Foundation, the American Wood Council and the Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association.