

114TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 5628

To accelerate the use of wood in buildings, especially tall wood buildings,  
and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 6, 2016

Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. KILMER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To accelerate the use of wood in buildings, especially tall  
wood buildings, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Timber Innovation Act  
5 of 2016”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1           (1) wood products play a significant role in the  
2 United States economy;

3           (2) the United States wood products industry  
4 employs more than 548,000 individuals in manufac-  
5 turing and forestry;

6           (3) private forest owners in the United States  
7 support approximately 2,400,000 jobs and  
8 \$87,000,000,000 in payroll;

9           (4) support for wood buildings and growing  
10 market opportunities for the use of wood products,  
11 such as tall wood building markets, could—

12                 (A) help ensure that forests in the United  
13 States remain healthy; and

14                 (B) create income streams for private for-  
15 est owners that may help the owners keep their  
16 land forested instead of selling the land for de-  
17 velopment;

18           (5) developing new markets for wood use in  
19 buildings may drive additional investment in haz-  
20 ardous fuels treatments on forest land;

21           (6) innovative wood product technologies and  
22 building systems—

23                 (A) have enabled longer wood spans, taller  
24 walls, and higher buildings; and

1 (B) continue to expand the possibilities for  
2 wood use in construction;

3 (7) wood, because it is a building material that  
4 sequesters carbon, has the potential to reduce the  
5 overall carbon footprint of a project that uses wood  
6 as a building material;

7 (8) research helps to modernize building codes  
8 on an international basis, and that modernization is  
9 needed in the United States for tall wood buildings;

10 (9) building codes specify a level of safety that  
11 each building material and system shall meet and  
12 that level of safety is the same regardless of the con-  
13 struction materials used;

14 (10) in the case of wood, building codes ensure  
15 that the allowable size, configuration, and required  
16 structural and fire protection features of a construc-  
17 tion project allow for the safety of all occupants;

18 (11) mass timber buildings, due to the thick,  
19 solid wood panels of which the buildings are com-  
20 posed, are slow to burn and have inherent fire resist-  
21 ance that, under many configurations, establishes a  
22 fire performance equal to or better than other con-  
23 struction materials, allowing mass timber to be used  
24 appropriately for buildings that are significantly tall-  
25 er and larger than traditional wood buildings; and

1           (12) National Forest System lands offer a  
2           ready source of wood for use in the production of  
3           mass timber and tall wood buildings.

4 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

5           In this Act:

6           (1) **MASS TIMBER.**—The term “mass timber”  
7           means a type of building component or system that  
8           uses large panelized wood construction, including—

9                   (A) cross-laminated timber;

10                   (B) nail laminated timber;

11                   (C) glue laminated timber;

12                   (D) laminated strand lumber; and

13                   (E) laminated veneer lumber.

14           (2) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means  
15           the Secretary of Agriculture.

16           (3) **TALL WOOD BUILDING.**—The term “tall  
17           wood building” means a building designed to be—

18                   (A) constructed with mass timber; and

19                   (B) more than 85 feet in height.

20 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOP-**  
21 **MENT PROGRAM FOR ADVANCING TALL**  
22 **WOOD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION.**

23           (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall establish a  
24           performance-driven research and development program for  
25           the purpose of advancing tall wood building construction

1 in the United States (referred to in this section as the  
2 “program”).

3 (b) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the program, the  
4 Secretary, in consultation with the State and Private For-  
5 estry deputy area of the Forest Service, shall—

6 (1) after receipt of input and guidance from,  
7 and collaboration with, the wood products industry,  
8 conservation organizations, and institutions of high-  
9 er education, conduct research at the Forest Prod-  
10 ucts Laboratory that meets measurable performance  
11 goals for the achievement of the priorities described  
12 in subsection (c); and

13 (2) after coordination and collaboration with  
14 the wood products industry and conservation organi-  
15 zations, make competitive grants to institutions of  
16 higher education to conduct research that meets  
17 measurable performance goals for the achievement  
18 of the priorities described in subsection (c).

19 (c) PROGRAM PRIORITIES.—The research carried out  
20 under the program shall give priority to—

21 (1) ways to improve the commercialization of  
22 tall wood building materials;

23 (2) analyzing the safety of tall wood building  
24 materials;

1           (3) calculations by the Forest Products Labora-  
2           tory of the life cycle environmental footprint, from  
3           extraction of raw materials through the manufac-  
4           turing process, of tall wood building construction;

5           (4) identifying the building code modifications  
6           necessary to construct tall wood buildings;

7           (5) analyzing methods to reduce the life cycle  
8           environmental footprint of tall wood building con-  
9           struction;

10          (6) analyzing the potential implications of the  
11          broad adoption of tall wood building technology and  
12          architecture in the commercial and residential build-  
13          ing market on wildlife and forest biodiversity; and

14          (7) one or more other research areas identified  
15          by the Secretary, in consultation with the State and  
16          Private Forestry deputy area of the Forest Service,  
17          conservation organizations, institutions of higher  
18          education, and the wood products industry.

19          (d) TIMEFRAME.—To the maximum extent prac-  
20          ticable, the measurable performance goals for the research  
21          carried out under the program shall be achievable within  
22          a 5-year timeframe.

23       **SEC. 5. TALL WOOD BUILDING COMPETITION.**

24          Subject to availability of appropriations, not less fre-  
25          quently than once during each fiscal year for the period

1 of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, the Secretary shall  
2 carry out a competition for a tall wood building design  
3 in accordance with section 24 of the Stevenson-Wydler  
4 Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3719).

5 **SEC. 6. WOOD INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM.**

6 (a) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this sec-  
7 tion, the term “eligible entity” means—

8 (1) an individual;

9 (2) a public or private entity (including a center  
10 of excellence that consists of one or more partner-  
11 ships between forestry, engineering, architecture, or  
12 business schools at one or more institutions of high-  
13 er education); or

14 (3) a State, local, or tribal government.

15 (b) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary, in car-  
16 rying out the wood innovation grant program of the Sec-  
17 retary described in the notice of the Secretary entitled  
18 “Request for Proposals: 2016 Wood Innovations Funding  
19 Opportunity” (80 Fed. Reg. 63498 (October 20, 2015)),  
20 may make a wood innovation grant to one or more eligible  
21 entities each year for the purpose of the acceleration of  
22 the adoption of emerging technologies in the development  
23 of innovative wood products for tall wood building con-  
24 struction.

1           (c) INCENTIVIZING USE OF EXISTING MILLING CA-  
2 PACITY.—In selecting among eligible proposals for the  
3 wood innovation grant program, the Secretary shall give  
4 priority to proposals which include the use or retrofitting  
5 (or both) of existing sawmill facilities located in Counties  
6 where the average annual unemployment rate exceeded the  
7 national average by more than 1 percent in the previous  
8 calendar year.

9           (d) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—As a condition of re-  
10 ceiving a grant under subsection (b), a recipient shall pro-  
11 vide funds equal to the amount the recipient receives  
12 under the grant, to be derived from non-Federal sources.

13 **SEC. 7. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

14           (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in cooperation  
15 with State foresters and State extension directors (or  
16 equivalent State officials), shall carry out a program of  
17 education and technical assistance for mass timber appli-  
18 cations (referred to in this section as the “program”).

19           (b) ACTIVITIES.—Activities under the program shall  
20 include—

21                   (1) the provision of assistance to an individual,  
22                   a public or private entity, or a local or tribal govern-  
23                   ment in the development of skills and knowledge re-  
24                   lating to the use of wood in mass timber applications  
25                   and other wood technologies;



1           (2) the provision of assistance to an individual,  
2           a public or private entity, or a State, local, or tribal  
3           government in the identification of opportunities for  
4           the use of mass timber; and

5           (3) activities to increase public understanding  
6           of—

7                   (A) the environmental, economic, and so-  
8                   cial values associated with using wood in the  
9                   construction of buildings; and

10                   (B) the relationship between the develop-  
11                   ment of markets for wood products and the  
12                   ability to carry out sustainable forest manage-  
13                   ment.

14           (c) METHODS.—The program may include the devel-  
15           opment and distribution of educational materials and  
16           holding events designed to transfer knowledge.

17           (d) EXPERTISE.—The Secretary shall—

18                   (1) maintain, within the Forest Service, suffi-  
19                   cient professional expertise relating to the uses of  
20                   wood products to conduct the program; and

21                   (2) improve that expertise by collaborating with  
22                   other Federal and non-Federal experts on the uses  
23                   of wood products.

24           (e) PARTNERS.—The Secretary shall collaborate and  
25           partner with one or more non-Federal entities, including

1 the governments of other countries, States, local govern-  
2 ments, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, and insti-  
3 tutions of higher education—

4           (1) to enhance tall wood building commer-  
5           cialization in the United States;

6           (2) to develop technical assistance relating to  
7           tall wood building commercialization; and

8           (3) to carry out the program.

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