

# Wood is Greener Than Many Other Common Building Materials, USDA Report Says

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**WASHINGTON --** The findings of a new U.S. Forest Service study indicate that wood should factor as a primary building material in green building, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced this week.

The authors of [\*Science Supporting the Economic and Environmental Benefits of Using Wood and Wood Products in Green Building Construction\*](#) reviewed the scientific literature and found that using wood in building products yields fewer greenhouse gases than using other common materials.

"This study confirms what many environmental scientists have been saying for years," said Vilsack. "Wood should be a major component of American building and energy design. The use of wood provides substantial environmental benefits, provides incentives for private landowners to maintain forest land, and provides a critical source of jobs in rural America."

The Forest Service report also points out that greater use of life cycle analysis in building codes and standards would improve the scientific underpinning of building codes and standards and thereby benefit the environment. A combination of scientific advancement in the areas of life cycle analysis and the development of new technologies for improved and extended wood utilization are needed to continue to advance wood as a green construction material. Sustainability of forest products can be verified using any credible third-party rating system, such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council or American Tree Farm System certification.

"The argument that somehow non-wood construction materials are ultimately better for carbon emissions than wood products is not supported by our research," said David Cleaves, the U.S. Forest Service Climate Change Advisor. "Trees removed in an environmentally responsible way allow forests to continue to sequester carbon through new forest growth. Wood products continue to benefit the environment by storing carbon long after the building has been constructed."

The use of forest products in the United States currently supports more than one million direct jobs, particularly in rural areas, and contributes more than \$100 billion to the country's gross domestic product.

To view the full Green Building report please click [here](#).