Enhance Climate Data and Applied Science

Policies that promote more measurement and better analysis of forest and climate data will strengthen our ability to leverage the carbon storage and sequestration capacity of U.S. forests and the sustainable wood products that are sourced from them.

Proper carbon accounting methods are critical to meaningfully reduce the carbon footprint of the built environment through greater use of wood products. The current practice significantly undervalues the climate benefits of long-term carbon storage in wood products and increasing the collection and measurement of data on forests and forest products will improve our ability to achieve national climate goals.

Did you know?

Substituting wood for conventional building materials could allow the U.S. to capture one-tenth of the global carbon emission reductions needed to meet the country's 2030 goals.

How will better data help meet climate goals in the built environment?

Using wood products in construction reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

- Mass timber can reduce the embodied carbon pollution of a structure by 25-45%, especially when sourced from sustainably managed forests.
- Displacing carbon-intensive traditional materials with wood in projects like multi-family housing, low-rise nonresidential construction and remodeling projects could result in a carbon benefit equal to about 21 million metric tons of CO_2 annually - an amount equivalent to taking 4.4 million automobiles off the road indefinitely.

Photo Credit: American Wood Council

The FCWG reflects the diversity of forest sector leaders dedicated to conserving, protecting and managing America's forests, including: forest sector businesses, conservation nonprofits, academic institutions, carbon markets, government agencies, state foresters and private landowners.

2022 Policy Priorities

Proposed Solutions to Enhance Forest-Climate Data and Applied Science

Strengthen the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program

- Better data leads to better outcomes. More frequent and robust forest measurement data, coupled with better analysis capabilities, will deepen our understanding of forest carbon.

- Expand USFS's FIA program, a leading source of forest carbon data, to provide even more comprehensive and granular data that will boost efficacy in meeting U.S. climate goals.

- Complete a nationwide re-measurement every five years and increase research capacity to produce a higher level of accuracy while advancing adaptation and resilience strategies to address catastrophic wildfire, invasive insects and disease.

- Increase funding for research in advanced wood products and other forest products with significant embodied carbon potential as well as new products and life cycle analysis efforts that help increase understanding of the carbon benefits of wood use.

Standardize carbon accounting frameworks and green procurement

- Adopt a whole-building life cycle assessment method for federal procurement that properly accounts for both the embodied and stored carbon in buildings and facilitates comparisons across materials to make better, carbon-smart choices.

- Establish a procurement mandate for federal buildings to significantly reduce the overall carbon footprint in new and renovated construction.

- Increase support for research on carbon accounting and measuring carbon in the built environment to help support the reliability of the assessment and procurement methodologies.

Increase funding for climate-informed public forest land restoration

- Research, planning and monitoring of public forest lands requires more technical assistance than ever with increasing frequency and severity of catastrophic events exacerbated by climate change.

- Funding should be increased for the following discretionary funding accounts:
    - Forest and Rangeland Research
    - Forest Inventory and Analysis
    - Land Management Planning, Inventory and Monitoring

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