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## **WoodWorks California Applauds New Green Building Standards Code Inclusion of LCA Demonstrates State’s Commitment to Addressing Climate Change**

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**LONG BEACH, Calif. (January 15, 2010)** – As the country’s first building code to incorporate life cycle assessment (LCA), California’s new Green Building Standards Code demonstrates the state’s commitment to addressing climate change and should be applauded. This is one of the key messages being delivered next week by WoodWorks California, an educational initiative focused on the use of wood in non-residential buildings, at its Wood Solutions Fairs in Long Beach and San Francisco.

“Even though it’s voluntary, the provision encouraging designers to select materials based on life cycle assessment is a significant and positive step forward because LCA focuses on scientifically measured impacts over assumptions—which are often wrong,” said Bryan Schuyler, regional director of WoodWorks California.

“Recycled materials are a good example. For years, everyone assumed that recycled products are always the best choice, and this is something you often see reflected in green building programs. But what if the choice is wood from a local, sustainably managed forest, which requires minimal energy to produce and transport and is endlessly renewable, or recycled steel, which requires a large amount of fossil fuel-based energy to produce and transport, and isn’t renewable. LCA will give you an unbiased assessment of which one is really better for the environment—and the answer is going to be wood.”

Widely recognized by the international scientific community, LCA is an objective way to compare materials, assemblies and even whole buildings, over the course of their entire lives, from resource extraction through manufacturing, transportation, installation, use, maintenance and disposal or re-use. It is widely used to compare building materials such as wood, steel and concrete, and has led scientists in Europe and North America to the same conclusion: compared to the alternatives, wood buildings produce less greenhouse gases, air pollution and water pollution, and require less energy across their life cycle.

The Consortium for Research on Renewable Industrial Materials (CORRIM) is one of the leading LCA organizations in North America and has conducted numerous studies on the impacts of forests and wood products on carbon emissions and storage. One study used LCA to compare homes framed with wood versus steel in Minneapolis and homes framed with wood versus concrete in Atlanta—the framing types most common to each city. In both cases, the wood-frame homes performed substantially better than their non-wood counterparts. According to the report, the homes framed in steel and concrete required 17 and 16 percent more energy, respectively (from extraction through maintenance), than the

wood-frame homes. The carbon footprint was also 26 percent higher for the steel-frame house and 31 percent higher for the concrete-frame house than the homes framed in wood.

According to Schuyler, the availability of new software tools such as the ATHENA® *EcoCalculator for Assemblies*, which is free and provides instant LCA results for hundreds of common building assemblies, has made it easy for architects and engineers to consider LCA results in their everyday projects ([www.athenasmi.org](http://www.athenasmi.org)). “Tools such as the EcoCalculator are especially useful early in the design process, when material choices have far-reaching implications for overall environmental impact,” he said. “They allow designers to experiment with different material mixes to achieve the most effective combination.”

The Implications of the California Green Building Standards Code for Wood Use in Buildings will also be examined at the upcoming California Wood Solutions Fairs, at a seminar presented by green building expert Jim Bowyer, Ph.D., of Bowyer & Associates and Dovetail Partners Inc. The first Wood Solutions Fair will be held on January 19<sup>th</sup> in Long Beach at the Long Beach Convention Center, and the second will be held on January 21<sup>st</sup> in San Francisco at the South San Francisco Convention Center.

Wood Solutions Fairs are free, day-long educational events on the use of wood in non-residential buildings. Both events will include a choice of 17 topical seminars as well as relevant trade booths and a presentation of the 2010 California Wood Design Awards. For a schedule and speaker bios or to register online, please click the appropriate link below:

**Long Beach** – <http://www.woodworks.org/educationTraining/california/newsEvents05270901.aspx>

**San Francisco** – <http://www.woodworks.org/educationTraining/california/newsEvents05270902.aspx>

WoodWorks is an approved AIA provider. Each Wood Solutions Fair provides an opportunity to earn up to six education credits at no cost.

### **About WoodWorks**

An initiative of the Wood Products Council, WoodWorks is a cooperative venture of all the major wood associations in North America, as well as research organizations and government agencies. It provides one-stop access to the widest possible range of information on the use of wood in non-residential structures. For more information, call 1-866-966-3448 or visit [www.woodworks.org](http://www.woodworks.org).

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