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# WoodWorks Partners with ULI Greenprint to Help Developers Reduce the Carbon Footprint of their Buildings

WASHINGTON (February 13, 2019) – A partnership announced today between the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Greenprint Center for Building Performance (Greenprint) and WoodWorks – Wood Products Council will support developers exploring the use of wood structure as a means to cost-effectively improve the carbon footprint of their buildings.

A non-profit organization staffed with expert architects and structural engineers, WoodWorks provides free project support and resources related to the design, engineering and construction of commercial and multi-family wood buildings across the U.S. ULI is a global real estate organization whose work is driven by 40,000-plus members dedicated to responsible land use and the creation of thriving, sustainable communities.

“Wood’s benefits from a carbon perspective are closely aligned with ULI’s support of Architecture 2030, the mission of which is to transform the built environment from a major contributor to the climate crisis to one of its solutions,” said Jennifer Cover, WoodWorks’ President and CEO. “As a Greenprint Gold Innovation Partner, we’ll provide technical support and resources that make it possible for developers to go further with wood than they have in the past—whether that’s a five-story wood-frame condominium or a 12-story mass timber office—and to do so economically.”

Wood buildings have two main benefits related to carbon:

- Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, release the oxygen and incorporate the carbon into their structures (e.g., stems, leaves) and surrounding soil. Wood is about 50 percent carbon by dry weight. When wood is used for buildings, this carbon is kept out of the atmosphere indefinitely, while the regenerating forest once again begins the cycle of carbon absorption.
- Wood products typically require less embodied energy to manufacture than other building materials, and most of that comes from renewable biomass (e.g., bark and other residual fiber) instead of fossil fuels. Substituting wood for fossil fuel-intensive materials is a way of avoiding greenhouse gas emissions. Life cycle assessment studies consistently show that wood outperforms other materials in this area.

With growing availability and code acceptance of mass timber products such as cross-laminated timber, there is great potential for larger and taller wood buildings to have a positive environmental impact through carbon sequestration and lower embodied energy. Recently approved changes to the 2021 International Building Code will increase the allowable height of wood structures to 18 stories; it is therefore timely to educate ULI members regarding the use of innovative wood building systems.

Mass timber also has the potential to help reduce the catastrophic wildfires being experienced across the country. After a century of suppressing forest fires to protect communities, many U.S. forests are now overly dense and susceptible to large and severe fires. Mass timber products create an opportunity

for large, solid structural elements to be manufactured from relatively small-diameter trees as well as other traditionally low-value resources (such as forests affected by insects). This creates a market incentive for forest thinning and other landscape restoration efforts that reduce the risk of fire. This is part of the reason states like Washington, Oregon and California have developed policies or initiatives to accelerate markets for mass timber.

For more information on wood's carbon benefits, including references for the statements made above, contact media@woodworks.org.

**About WoodWorks**

WoodWorks – Wood Products Council provides free technical support as well as education and resources related to the code-compliant design of commercial and multi-family wood buildings. WoodWorks staff have the expertise to assist with all aspects of wood building design, including (but not limited to) allowable heights and areas/construction types, structural detailing of wood and hybrid systems, fire resistance and acoustical-rated assemblies, efficient and code-compliant lateral system design, and alternate means of code compliance. The organization is also well-versed in the environmental performance of wood buildings, including carbon-related impacts, energy performance, and contributions to resiliency.

**About the ULI Greenprint Center for Building Performance**

The Urban Land Institute Greenprint Center for Building Performance is a worldwide alliance of leading real estate owners, investors, and strategic partners committed to improving the environmental performance of the global real estate industry through value enhancing strategies. Through measurement, benchmarking, knowledge sharing, and the implementation of best practices, Greenprint and its members strive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030. Greenprint is a research center within the ULI Center for Sustainability and Economic Performance, which also oversees ULI's Urban Resilience Program and the Building Healthy Places initiative.