



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the record, my name is Heather Stegner. I live here in Boise and I am the Vice President of Communications and Educational Outreach for the American Wood Council. AWC is the national trade association representing structural wood products and I offer our strong support for the passage of House Bill 143.

AWC has been fully engaged in the multi-year process of testing, research and code development to gain recognition in the model codes for innovative mass timber. This process involved building and fire protection experts, building and fire officials, researchers from the USDA Forest Products Laboratory and fire testing at the ATF fire testing facility. The full-scale fire tests were conducted on a two-story mass timber building, which exceeded the performance expectations of the current code requirements in all cases. This process ensured that mass timber used in Idaho's buildings will meet the highest of standards.

Idaho would be joining Utah, Washington, Oregon and California as early adopters to allow for taller and larger mass timber buildings than currently permitted by state code.

However, the use of mass timber for constructing taller buildings is not a new concept. Such use has been prevalent in Europe for more than two decades. Interest has been stimulated here because, along with mass timber's inherent strength and efficiency, there is an added environmental benefit through both sequestration of carbon from the atmosphere and substitution of other fossil-fuel dependent materials.

In concluding, I'd like to share a few key points:

- Mass timber buildings are very different from traditional lightweight wood buildings. Mass timber buildings are constructed with large pre-manufactured, multi-layered, solid wood panels resulting in solid timber floors and walls typically ranging from 5 to 12 inches in thickness.
- In addition to the ATF fire tests I mentioned, the federal government worked with our partner organization, WoodWorks, to conduct live blast testing on mass timber. The structures remained intact under significant explosives and the test results allowed for the incorporation of mass timber construction on military bases.
- The natural properties of wood – high strength and light weight – allow mass timber to fare well in high wind and seismic events. Even when subjected to severe earthquake simulation tests, structures showed no residual deformation.

AWC thanks the State of Idaho for recognizing the significant benefits that accrue from greater wood product use. Thank you and I now stand for questions.