

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 15, 2023

Commissioner Elliot Doomes
Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Commissioner Doomes,

We write to urge you to increase the utilization of mass timber in federal building projects. Mass timber products represent an opportunity to both create rural jobs, reduce wildfire risk, and increase forest resiliency, while also reducing the carbon footprint of federal buildings.

As you know, the impact of the federal procurement process is significant – with the GSA Green Building Advisory Committee reporting that federal funding supported the construction of over 253 million square feet of buildings, representing more than \$11 billion in value. By incorporating more mass timber products into federal buildings, the GSA has a unique and historic opportunity to help reduce the carbon footprint of federal buildings, all while reducing waste and construction costs and increasing seismic and fire resiliency.

Since 2015, mass timber has seen unprecedented growth in its use across the United States – from just a handful of buildings 8 years ago to almost 2,000 today. Further, the mass timber industry offers Americans access to good paying forestry jobs. In fact, in Oregon, employment in this sector has grown six times faster than it has in the rest of the United States over the past decade.¹

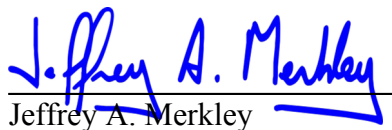
Given the numerous benefits of American-made mass timber and wood innovation products, please provide answers to the following:

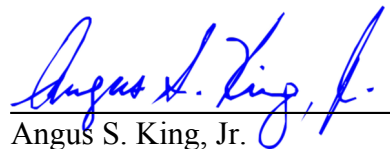
- What steps is GSA taking to implement the language included in the FY23 omnibus appropriations bill, directing the agency to work with partners to expand the utilization of mass timber and innovative wood products in federal buildings?
- How can federal agencies better incorporate mass timber into the planning, construction, and renovation of federal buildings and what guidelines are you putting in place to make happen?
- What challenges exist in expanding use of American-made mass timber and other innovative wood products in federal buildings?
- How has the GSA collaborated with the Forest Service on these efforts?

We applaud the initial steps that GSA has taken to identify ways to increase the sustainability of the building materials used in the construction of federal buildings and increase the use of mass timber. We look forward to hearing your response to my questions and continuing to work with you to promote the use of mass timber in the public procurement process.

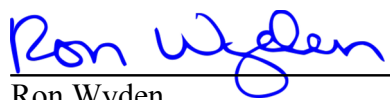
¹ Business Oregon, “Forestry & Wood Products,”
<https://www.oregon.gov/biz/programs/homeareas/byboregon/targetindustries/pages/forestry.aspx>.


Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

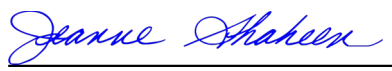

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United States Senator


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CC:
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