Flores 1

### Cruz Flores

#### English 2

## CHS

### Forest Products Week Essay Contest

Wildfires, tsunamis, droughts, floods, dwindling ecosystems and moribund wildlife are all consequences of mankind's volatile actions. These environmental issues are considerably affected by the world's consumption of building materials that result in an immense amount of greenhouse gases being released into the air. The main culprits causing these substantial greenhouse gas emissions are materials such as steel or cement. As a result of these drawbacks, an appropriate question arises: *Is there a viable replacement for such building materials?* The usage of timber in construction is very suitable because it can not only impede these environmental problems, but can also be beneficial to the economy.

To begin, the application of wood in construction can diminish the environmental problems that are caused as a result of using other materials, mainly due to its energy efficiency and lack of carbon emissions. According to the database *Why Build with Wood?*, by The Teal-Jones Group, "Wood is 400 times better at insulating than steel and 15 times better than concrete." This means that the energy consumption from heating and cooling will be reduced from the utilization of wood. Not only do trees decrease the amount of energy used, but they are also produced from natural solar energy. The same database also states that trees eliminate carbon dioxide from the air while materials such as steel and concrete increase carbon dioxide emissions. Carbon dioxide is a considerable contributor to climate change; thus, it is critical that the emissions are limited. These environmental advantages are crucial to the prosperity and even survival of the planet and its inhabitants.

Flores 2

In addition to it being environmentally favorable, the usage of wood in construction can also have numerous economical benefits. According to the U.S. Forest Service, "the U.S. forest products industry employs about one million workers and accounts for approximately six percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, placing it roughly on par with the automotive and plastics industry." More jobs will be generated in order to tackle the tasks of gathering and processing forest materials, which will affect unemployment rates for the better. The database also asserts that "The forest products industry is among the top ten manufacturing sector employers in 48 states and generates over \$200 billion a year in sales and about \$54 billion in annual payroll." Not only is the forest industry creating many jobs, but it is also generating substantial amounts of revenue.

Others may question the security of wood as a building resource by arguing that wood is prone to catching on fire. Although this is a reasonable statement, this claim dismisses the fact that wood can be modified to be less susceptible to catching fire with enhancements such as chemicals or coatings. Furthermore, buildings with broad structure elements do not collapse easily to fire, due to wood's insulator qualities, according to "Wood as a Building Material; It's Benefits and Disadvantages", by Prof. Dr. Ramazan ÖZEN. Consequently, combustion doesn't pose as much of a threat to wood in construction as one would think.

As can be seen, timber should be used as a primary resource for construction. It is both fundamental to the success of the planet, and beneficial to the economy. The usage of wood as a building material may overall help the planet out as it can eliminate or limit the use of other harmful materials, and can reduce the number of people left without jobs. Overall, wood serves as an effective replacement for concrete and steel.

# Works Cited

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