

August 22, 2016

Dear Senators:

We are writing to bring to your attention our concerns with S. 2892, the *Timber Innovation Act (TIA)*, which could undermine the safety and soundness of the built environment – including tall wood buildings – and also provide an unfair advantage to one building material over all others. We represent a diverse group of stakeholders from the construction, labor and building materials sector organizations.

Specifically, the legislation directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a research and development program “advancing” the use of wood in tall buildings more than 85 ft in height. It also creates a grant program for state and local communities to promote the use of wood materials in construction of these buildings over other materials and establishes a competition for tall wood building design. Furthermore, this legislation creates an imbalance in the marketplace by allowing the federal government to choose winners and losers.

Some of our organizations also have serious concerns about the safety of extensive wood use in tall building construction. Model building codes, including the International Building Code (IBC), classify mass timber as a combustible construction material with longstanding limitations on building height and area to mitigate the inherent risk to firefighters, first responders and building occupants. Recent code proposals sponsored by the wood industry seeking to amend these limitations have been considered and rejected. The code development process provides the appropriate consensus mechanism for interested parties and building science experts to evaluate changes in the interest of public safety. We encourage the federal government to allow the code development process to continue to evaluate the risk associated with timber construction in a comprehensive manner without the appearance of a preference for any one construction material, as suggested by the TIA legislation.

Again, we believe it is inappropriate for the federal government to pick winners and losers for building materials in the construction industry – especially at U.S. taxpayers’ expense. The wood industry already benefits from a federal checkoff program, which is entirely appropriate. Putting the federal government in the position of promoting one industry at the expense of others would be inappropriate and counterproductive for job growth. The federal government should instead be promoting fair competition in the marketplace. It is critically important to allow the engineers, architects, general contractors, material suppliers and other interested and affected parties to determine the best practices for designing and constructing buildings based on sound science and engineering standards.

As Congress considers this, or similar legislation, we ask you to consider our thoughts and concerns.

Sincerely,

ALD Precast (OH)
APAC-Central, Inc. (AR, KS)
Adams Products, an Oldcastle company (NC)
Aggregate Industries Management, Inc.
Aggregate & Ready Mix Association of Minnesota
Alabama Concrete Industries Association
Amcors Sierra, an Oldcastle company (CA)
American Concrete, an Oldcastle company (IA)
American Concrete Pavement Association
American Concrete Pipe Association
American Concrete Pressure Pipe Association
American Concrete Pumping Association
American Institute of Steel Construction
American Iron & Steel Institute
Anchor, an Oldcastle company (NJ)
Anderson Concrete Corp (OH)
Argos
Arizona Masonry Contractors Association
Arizona Masonry Guild, Inc.
Arizona Rock Products Association
Arkansas Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Bandon Concrete & Development, an Oldcastle company (OR)
Bayou Concrete, LLC (MS)
Breckenridge Material Company (MO)
Buckeye Ready Mix (OH)
Buzzi Unicem
California Construction and Industrial Materials Association
CalPortland
Capital Concrete, Inc. (VA)
Carew Concrete & Supply Co., Inc.
Carolinas Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Carroll Concrete Co. (NH)
CEMEX
Cemstone Products Company (MN)
Central Pre-Mix Concrete Co. (WA)
Central Supply Company (WV)
Central Washington Concrete, an Oldcastle company (WA)
Chandler Concrete Co. Inc (NC)
Chaney Enterprises (MD)
Commercial Metals Company (TX)
Concrete Foundations Association
Concrete Promotional Group, Inc.
Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute

Concrete Supply Company (NC)
Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Inc.
Connecticut Ready Mixed Concrete Association, Inc.
Construction Products, Inc. (TN)
Construction Service (NH)
Coreslab Structures, Inc. (MO)
CPM, an Oldcastle company (WA)
Dakota Red Corporation (IA)
Dimension Fabricators Inc. (NY)
Drake Cement (AZ)
Drake Materials (AZ)
Eugene Sand & Gravel, an Oldcastle company (OR)
Expanded Shale, Clay and Slate Institute
Florida Independent Concrete & Associated Products, Inc.
Florida Masonry Apprentice & Educational Foundation
Four Corners Materials, an Oldcastle company (CO)
G&B Redi-Mix (ID)
GCC of America
Gary Merlino Construction Company (WA)
Geiger Ready Mix Co., Inc. (MO)
Georgia/Carolinas PCI - a Chapter of the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute
Georgia Masonry Supply, an Oldcastle company (GA)
Georgia Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Green & White Rock Products, an Oldcastle company (OR)
Greenhill Concrete (OK)
Griswold Ready Mix Concrete (FL)
Hagan Harker (IL)
Hawkeye Ready Mix (IA)
Helena Sand & Gravel, Inc. (MT)
Holcim (US), Inc.
Idaho Materials & Construction (ID)
Illinois Ready Mixed Concrete Association
International Masonry Institute
Interstate Concrete & Asphalt Co (ID)
Iowa Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Jewell, an Oldcastle company (TX)
Kangley Rock and Recycling (WA)
Kentucky Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Kerkstra Precast, Inc (MI)
King's Materials, Inc (IA)
L. Suzio Concrete Company (CT)
Lafarge North America, Inc.
Lehigh Hanson, Inc.
Lynchburg Ready Mix

LYCON Inc (WI)
North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association
Northern New England Concrete Promotion Association
Northwest Cement Council
MMC Materials, Inc. (MS)
Martin Marietta
Maryland Ready Mix Concrete Association
Maschmeyer Concrete Company of Florida, Inc.
Massachusetts Concrete & Aggregate Producers Association
Mason Contractors Association of America
Masonry Association of Florida
Masonry Institute of America
Masonry Institute of Michigan
Michigan Concrete Association
Midland Concrete Products (IA)
Minnesota Concrete Council
Mississippi Concrete Industries Association
Missouri Concrete Association
Monarch Cement Company
Mountain West Construction Group
National Concrete Masonry Association
National Precast Concrete Association
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association
New Jersey Precast Concrete Association
New York State Concrete Masonry Association
North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association
North Dakota Ready Mix Concrete Products Association
Northfield, an Oldcastle company (IL)
Northwest Concrete Masonry Association
Oldcastle Coastal (FL)
Oldcastle, Inc.
Oldcastle Materials, Inc.
Oldcastle Materials Southwest Group, Inc.
Oldcastle Precast, Inc.
Ozinga Ready Mix Concrete, Inc.
PAI Ready Mix LLC. (LA)
PCS (MD)
Pacific Northwest Precast Concrete Association
Pennsylvania Aggregates and Concrete Association
Pennsylvania Precast Association
Portland Cement Association
Precast Concrete Association of New York
Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute

Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute of Illinois and Wisconsin
Quality Aggregates (WA)
Quality Block and Supply (FL)
Quality Precast Company (FL)
R&R Rebar Fabricators (FL)
Riverbend Sand & Gravel, an Oldcastle company (OR)
Roanoke Cement Company (VA)
Ross Prestressed Concrete, Inc. (TN)
Southeast Cement Promotion Association
Southeast Concrete Masonry Association (GA)
Spurlino Materials (OH)
Staker Parson Companies (UT)
Steel Deck Institute
Steel Framing Industry Association
Steel Joist Institute
Steel Manufacturers Association
Stone Concepts (IA)
Stoneway Concrete (WA)
Strata Corporation (ND)
Superlite, an Oldcastle company (AZ)
Tennessee Concrete Association
Texas Concrete (TX)
Thomas Concrete (GA)
Tindall Corporation
Titan America
Viking Redi-Mix, an Oldcastle company (OR)
Virginia Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Vulcan Materials Company
United Brotherhood of Carpenters
United Companies (CO)
United Materials, LLC (NY)
U.S. Concrete, Inc. (TX)
Washington Aggregates & Concrete Association
Wenatchee Sand & Gravel, an Oldcastle company (WA)
Western States Clay Products Association
Wiggins Concrete Co., Inc (SC)
Wisconsin Precast Concrete Association
Wisconsin Ready Mixed Concrete Association