

THE CONCRETE TRUTH:

Debunking the Myths of Big Wood in Sandy Springs, GA

On August 16, Sandy Springs City Council leaders voted to ban the use of light-framed combustible construction materials for buildings over three stories and larger than 100,000 square feet. These efforts not only put the safety of their citizens first, but increase the durability and longevity of the buildings in their city as well.

There's also immense public support for these building code changes—**96% of Georgia voters overwhelmingly support the Sandy Springs requirement to build with concrete** or steel. In addition to this support, 94% of voters would like to see their own cities adopt similar regulations.

Robert Glowinski, president and CEO of the American Wood Council, recently published a letter to the editor in Reporter Newspapers in response to actions taken by Sandy Springs City Council.

Glowinski's letter prioritizes the interests of the Wood Council over the safety of building occupants.

Turn over to see how the facts stack against the claims.

If you're not building with concrete, it might be time to start.
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AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL CLAIMS

THE CONCRETE TRUTH



The ban on wood construction "had nothing to do with safety and everything to do with limiting development."

Wood buildings burn, rot and are blown apart in tornadoes and hurricanes. Wood is also a fire risk; **it combusts at 375°F**. Concrete can withstand temperatures over 1000°F and holds strong during natural disasters, even in winds over 100 mph.



"The city's decision lacks any substantive technical basis and can be seen for what it is – simply a means to slow down growth and development."

Products such as **Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF)** can actually enhance the speed of urban growth and development. ICFs consolidate six building steps into one, and in many cases they can go up faster than wood framing.



"...jurisdictions wanting to slow development using the artifice of building safety to attack the most economical methods of building"

Using materials like concrete during construction means having a structure that lasts longer and **reduces overall lifecycle costs by 5% to 8%**. Additionally, concrete requires very little maintenance, saving developers and investors money over the long term.



"Decisions like this often come back to haunt the jurisdiction with reduced tax bases that result in higher taxes, much higher construction costs resulting from decreased supply, and in this case, significantly increased environmental impacts."

When you factor in all aspects of building, concrete structures provide more long-term value and also cost less to insure due to their safety, durability and resilience. **Energy and maintenance costs are also lower for concrete structures as they use 6% to 12% less energy than code-compliant wood frame construction.**

Concrete's thermal mass properties save 5-8% in annual energy costs compared to softwood lumber. **Additionally, concrete saved 3-5% in reduced greenhouse gas emissions over the building's lifecycle.** Because concrete is so strong, builders use fewer materials and get more benefits, helping investors and developers save on upfront costs.



"It does not make sense to prohibit development and use of wood construction when state-of-the-art building codes support its safe and resilient use and when it has lower environmental impacts than fossil-fuel intensive products that will be substituted for it."

Each year, homes, offices and multifamily residential buildings built with wood are destroyed by fire and storms, with damages costing Americans billions of dollars. Citizens across the country are taking note and are demanding building code changes that favor stronger building materials like concrete and steel. **In Georgia, 94% of voters would like to see their cities adopt building codes that prioritize their safety.**

Water, sand, stone or gravel make up nearly 90% of the concrete mixture. The process of mining sand and gravel, crushing stone, combining the materials in a concrete plant and transporting concrete to the construction site requires little energy and emits a very small amount of CO². Concrete manufacturers are also using waste byproducts from other industries to make concrete.

On average, concrete saves 3-5% in reduced greenhouse gas emissions over a building's lifecycle. Deforestation, on the other hand, causes 12% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Impacts of wood (forestry) are 250-325% higher than concrete.



"The wood products industry employs almost 18,000 people in Georgia, with an annual payroll approaching \$880 million. Take away wood and you take away those jobs, maybe even from people who live in Sandy Springs."

Nearly 51,000 jobs are supported by the concrete industry in Georgia. The industry is also responsible for bringing in over \$800 million in revenue to the state.

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