THE HIDDEN COSTS OF MASS TIMBER BUILDINGS

Compared to concrete, building with cross-laminated timber (CLT) can end up costing builders, owners, and residents a lot more in the long run.

Naturally Disastrous

Unlike concrete, wood buildings are vulnerable to severe damage in the face of flooding, high winds, and other forms of nature’s fury. These extreme weather events cost the U.S. billions in recovery every year, which is why it is vital to build a resilient structure that can withstand Mother Nature.

Higher Risk = Higher Premiums

Newsflash - a building material that can burn, rot, develop mold, and break in a stiff breeze carries higher rates for both builder’s risk and property insurance. Who knew? Concrete can cost up to 72% less to insure than a wood-frame building.

The Original Tinder

Fact: wood burns.
Better fact: concrete doesn’t.
When it comes to safety, insurance, rebuilding, and costs to the community, it’s not hard to do the math here.

Mass Timber Comes at an Environmental Cost

To build an 18-story, 180,000 square foot CLT building, you need over 17 acres of wood, which releases 11,533 metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. It’s no surprise, then, that clear-cutting trees is behind 12% of the world’s gas emissions. Even a study from Oregon State University confirmed that big timber is overwhelmingly the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state.

Money Pits

CLT costs at least 16-29% more per square foot than a cast-in-place concrete solution. With only 1/3 of the thermal insulating ability of concrete, and factoring in the cost of extra insulation and expensive air and water barriers to meet minimum standards, CLT homes cost significantly more to maintain.