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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **USDA STUDY SHOWS ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF WOOD AS GREEN BUILDING MATERIAL**

WASHINGTON, DC – The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) welcomes a study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) summarizing scientific findings that support the environmental and economic benefits of using wood in green building construction.

In a news release today announcing the study

([www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2011/09/0426.xml&contentidonly=true](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2011/09/0426.xml&contentidonly=true)), the USDA stated: “Sustainability of forest products can be verified using any credible third-party rating system, such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council or American Tree Farm System.”

"This study confirms what many environmental scientists have been saying for years," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in the news release. "Wood should be a major component of American building and energy design. The use of wood provides substantial environmental benefits, provides incentives for private landowners to maintain forest land, and provides a critical source of jobs in rural America."

The study, *Science Supporting the Economic and Environmental Benefits of Using Wood and Wood Products in Green Building Construction*, says a recent lifecycle analysis found that harvesting, transporting, manufacturing, and using wood in lumber and panel products in building yields fewer emissions – including greenhouse gases – than the resource extraction, manufacture and use of other common building materials.

It says “sustainable forest management can produce stronger, healthier forests that serve as a ‘carbon sink’ to clean air of greenhouse gases and purify drinking water for wildlife and U.S. municipal water systems. Harvested trees can find value in wood products and systems for green building construction that continue to benefit the environment.”

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Larry Selzer, President and CEO of The Conservation Fund and Vice-Chair of the SFI Board of Directors, said the study is good news for forests and forest communities. “Working forests are an essential part of our nation’s critical infrastructure,” Selzer said. “They provide clean air, clean water, wood products and jobs for more than two million people. By taking this step in recognizing the importance of wood in green building and the role of forest certification in verifying sustainability, Secretary Vilsack and the USDA are promoting a major investment in an essential part of our nation’s infrastructure.”

The report also says research can advance the use of wood in green buildings through development of new product technologies such as cross laminated timber (CLT), which allows large, solid-wood structural panels to be factory manufactured from low-value, small-diameter trees and trees killed by insects and disease. It says these developments can support forest conservation management by providing revenue to reduce treatment costs on forest land needing ecological restoration.

“SFI welcomes USDA research related to emerging issues in forestry, markets and green building,” SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow said. “SFI Inc is also committed to research related to conservation and productivity through our standard requirements and our conservation and community partnerships grants program ([www.sfiprogram.org/conservation-grant/index.php](http://www.sfiprogram.org/conservation-grant/index.php)).”

The USDA study is posted at [www.fs.fed.us/news/2011/releases/09/green-building-report.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2011/releases/09/green-building-report.pdf).

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### **About SFI Inc.**

SFI Inc. is an independent non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. Across North America, more than 190 million acres/78 million hectares/ are certified to the SFI forest management standard, making it the largest single forest standard in the world. SFI chain-of-custody certification tells buyers the percentage of fiber from certified forests, certified sourcing and/or post-consumer recycled content. The SFI program’s unique fiber sourcing requirements promote responsible forest management on all suppliers’ lands. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally.