BEIJING TO USE WOOD FOR SIX-STOREY, MID-RISE BUILDING

BEIJING – An agreement signed today between the governments of China, Canada and British Columbia will further promote and adapt wood-frame technology to meet China’s growing demand for energy-efficient, climate-friendly housing, announced the Honourable Christian Paradis, Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources, and B.C. Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell.

“Advanced Canadian wood-frame construction systems are proven winners when it comes to reducing carbon emissions,” said Paradis. “This agreement will help China adapt our systems to their unique needs and, in the process, open up the Chinese market to more Canadian lumber and wood products.”

“Six-storey apartment buildings are the most common form of accommodation in China,” said Bell. “The agreement we have reached is to pursue a six-storey, wood-frame demonstration structure in Beijing. To develop this sector of the Chinese housing market would mean billions more board feet of B.C. lumber going to China every year.”

The agreement is based on a memorandum of understanding signed with the Chinese Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development. It calls for collaborative research and development of wood-frame building systems designed to meet China’s demand for energy-efficient construction with a low-carbon footprint.

The working relationship covers five years and includes a commercially developed, six-storey building in Beijing to demonstrate wood-frame design to Chinese developers, officials, and consumers. A joint working committee will be established under the MOU to coordinate implementation. The agreement also includes sharing expertise and producing technical standards for wood-frame construction in China.

Bell signed the agreement while in Beijing on a trade mission to promote sales of B.C. wood products in China. Senior executives of the forest sector accompanied Bell on the trip.

China is the fastest growing export market for Canadian wood products, with most of the lumber sourced from British Columbia. In 2009, B.C. lumber exports to China reached 1.63 billion board feet, double the volume of 2008, and valued at $328 million.

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