

# Office of the Commissioner of Insurance: State agency leaders meet with researchers at USDA forest products lab to support greater climate resiliency

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**Madison, Wis.** — Today, state agency leadership from the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI), Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS), and Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) visited with researchers at the USDA Forest Products Lab as part of their ongoing Stronger Wisconsin outreach campaign.

“Over the past year, our Stronger Wisconsin partners have joined us around the state as we learned about some of the cutting-edge climate resiliency work being done,” said Insurance Commissioner Nathan Houdek. “Sustainable wood utilization is one way Wisconsin can become more climate resilient, and most homes in the United States have already been built using technology researched right here at the Forest Products Lab.”

The mission of the USDA Forest Products Lab is to identify and conduct innovative wood and fiber utilization research that contributes to conservation and productivity of the forest resource, thereby sustaining forests, the economy, and quality of life. It is the only federally funded wood utilization research lab, and it has been in Madison since 1910. Wood frame technology researched at the Forest Products Lab is used in over 90% of our nation’s homes. Their current research includes an area focused on [building and fire sciences](#) which has recently conducted research on [moisture-safe wood buildings](#) and the [fire performance of adhesives in cross-](#)

[laminated timber.](#)

“Buildings constructed with mass timber and other wood products sometimes face challenges accessing financing and insurance coverage, but we are connecting the dots between our industries and the experts in these fields to reduce those challenges and support the use of more sustainable materials,” said DFI Secretary-designee Cheryll Olson-Collins.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s [Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters database](#), there were 20 severe storm, two flooding, and six drought-related billion-dollar disasters that affected Wisconsin between 2000 and 2020. The way communities, homes, and other structures are designed and built influence their ability to withstand these severe weather events.

“Climate change presents a serious risk to the economic stability of property owners, small businesses, and entire communities. We can reduce these risks with education, preparation, and mitigation efforts,” said DSPS Secretary-designee Dan Hereth.