

Coalition bois Québec is officially launched

Created in response to government's wood-use strategy

BY LYNN MOORE, THE GAZETTE SEPTEMBER 16, 2009

Wood is the ideal building material for this carbon-sensitive era, according to the freshly minted Coalition bois Québec.

Not only does the use of wood in construction projects reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, wood is an economically sound alternative to steel and concrete. And that economic advantage will increase as the inevitable carbon taxes or cap-and-trade systems are established, coalition members said yesterday.

"Right now, the price of certain (building) materials is twisted," said Steven Guilbeault, of the environmental lobby group Équiterre.

"We don't taken into account greenhouse gas emissions, but we are about to start paying for that cost," he said, noting the climate change conference that aims to replace the Kyoto Protocol with a new international treaty to control emissions is set for December in Copenhagen.

Carbon dioxide, the key contributor to greenhouse gas, is the leading culprit behind climate change. Healthy forests capture carbon dioxide, and the use of one cubic metre of wood harvested from those forests in place of other building materials reduces carbon dioxide emissions by one tonne, coalition director François Tanguay said.

Yesterday's launch of the coalition was held at the CEGEP Marie-Victorin's sports complex, a \$17-million, 147,400-square-foot complex made from wood.

"Five or 10 years ago, no one would have thought twice about building this with anything but steel," Tanguay said.

But because the building was designed to be built with wood, it will cost less than its steel counterpart, Villeneuve said.

Using Quebec wood also protects forestry jobs, a fact that contributed to the Confédération des syndicats nationaux's decision to build its Fondation (building in Quebec City) with wood, CSN president Claudette Carbonneau said.

Six storeys tall, the CSN building will be the tallest wood commercial building in North America. In London, England, construction is under way on the nine-storey "timber tower," Tanguay said.

Described as an independent, non-profit forum, the coalition was created in response to the

government's wood-use strategy, adopted in 2008. It and the Centre d'expertise sur la construction commercial en bois share a two-year \$3-million budget, largely underwritten by Quebec.

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