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USDA invests nearly \$34M to strengthen wood products economy, forest sector jobs, sustainable forest management

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Press Office

WASHINGTON, April 6, 2023 - As part of its goal of investing in rural America, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing today that \$33.7 million from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will fund projects to strengthen the wood products economy and promote sustainable forest management. This investment supports a crucial link between resilient, healthy forests and strong rural economies and jobs in the forestry sector, especially in communities that depend on national forests and grasslands to grow and thrive.

“Healthy forests depend on a healthy forest products industry and as the nation faces an ongoing wildfire crisis, it is more important than ever to invest in sustainable forest management across all lands,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “These investments will reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, support existing jobs, and create new economic opportunities in Tribal and economically disadvantaged communities.”

Forest restoration creates byproducts like small diameter timber and woody biomass, which has historically been of little market value. Thanks in part to [investments in innovative wood products](#) from USDA Forest Service, this material which may have been discarded, can be made into many types of wood products.

Today's announcement provides \$29 million to establish, reopen, or improve businesses that purchase and process these byproducts from projects on federally managed or tribal lands at risk of wildfire, insects and disease. More than two thirds of the funded businesses will use byproducts from forest restoration and hazardous fuels reduction on landscapes identified in the Forest Service's [Wildfire Crisis Strategy](#).

These businesses are also vital employers in disadvantaged communities and tribal communities. Two thirds of all funded proposals will be implemented in disadvantaged communities as identified by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#). Funding will also directly support tribal communities that are expanding manufacturing capacity.

In addition to supporting wood processing facilities, \$4.7 million will fund temporary water crossing for skidders and other heavy forestry equipment. These bridges protect streams, creeks and wetlands during forestry operations. The funding will assist in implementing a rental or cost-share program that promotes the use of temporary water crossings across all lands.

Visit the Forest Service website for more information on funding for [innovative uses of wood](#), detailed information on [funding to wood processing facilities](#), and the Forest Service's [temporary bridges program](#).

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