



January 20, 2017

U. S. Forest Service  
Mr. Dan Len  
1720 Peachtree Road, NW Ste. 816N  
Atlanta, GA 30309

Dear Mr. Len

I am writing on behalf of Palmetto AgriBusiness Council (PABC) to express our support and commitment to Clemson University's proposal entitled "**Development and Implementation of a Timber Bridge System**". PABC represents some of the largest employers in South Carolina with a mission to sustain the economic viability of the state's agribusiness industry (agriculture & forestry).

The University's proposal is to develop an economic, sustainable bridge system. This developed timber bridge system would be competitive in the short to medium span (approximately 25 to 70 foot spans) bridge market with concrete and steel alternatives, and, therefore would receive general acceptance in the bridge design and construction community. Also, this research will advance the structural and functional performance of timber bridges. Based on a review of past timber practice combined with the recent timber industry developments the research team has targeted Glulam beams combined with CLT deck panels as the most likely system for further investigation. These types of bridges have been used in other countries and on some federal, state and private lands. Clemson's work will 1) Optimize the use of Glulam and CLT in bridge systems; 2) Develop durable connections for the components in timber bridges; 3) propose and champion additions and improvements to bridge design and construction specifications (i.e., AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specification<sup>1</sup> and AASHTO Bridge Construction Specification<sup>2</sup>) that will allow for this type of construction to be used on public bridges throughout the United States; and 4) Implement and demonstrate program achievements through design and construction of a short span timber bridge.

Funding from the U.S. Forest Service for this project will change the way that the state constructs bridges. With more than 400 rural bridges that or either not in use or that do not carry adequate loads finding a lower cost, easily constructed alternative will have a dramatic impact on the state's infrastructure. The state if it accepts this bridge concept will demonstrate leadership about the value of wood products and the economic impact that they provide to the state and its rural infrastructure. Additionally, by harvesting timber across the state, SC will see better forest management practices and healthier forests, including the 600,000+ acres for National Forests in SC.

PABC recognizes the importance of this project and is pleased to provide this letter of support. The proposed research will support the forest products industry, rural economic development and forest health which are closely aligned with our goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Brown", written in a cursive style.

Randy Brown  
Chairman

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