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New Study Shows Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs) Are Greener than Conventional Home Framing

A new study shows that building a home using Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs) produces up to10 times more energy savings compared to traditional stud framing, resulting in an energy payback period of just 5 years. And, SIPs reduces global warming potential by 13 times more than conventional framing measured by equivalent carbon emissions, recapturing greenhouse gases in just 3.8 years.

The study, conducted by environmental impact experts Franklin Associates, quantified the energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions of a fast-growing technology called SIPs, compared to conventional wood framing. The results present a powerful life cycle analysis showing that structural insulated panels make homes more efficient, comfortable, and environmentally sustainable. In Canada, the performance is even better, producing energy savings 18.6 times greater with a 2.7 year payback. The global warming reduction is 18.2 times better than stick-built construction with a 2.7 year payback.

“This study is significant because it is the first comprehensive comparison of the two different types of construction from raw materials right through a building’s life cycle,” said CEO Jamie Jenkins of the Murus Company, Inc., a leading supplier of the insulating panels. “The continuous SIPs whole-wall system has virtually no thermal bridging, breaks or air infiltration like wood or steel framing, producing a tighter building enclosure and reducing energy consumption. But, this study actually quantifies the return on investment over a building’s 50-year life and is a truer measure of what defines a green home,” Jenkins said.

The analysis was based on a wood-sided, 1791 square- foot home, one with 2x6, R-19 insulated walls and the other with 6 _” SIPs with EPS core insulation. The study calculated the energy invested in BTU’s based on raw materials and the energy mix used throughout the production of the framing products. It also added transportation to market. Energy saved is based on BTU’s of a home’s heating and cooling. The global warming potential (GWP) measures equivalent emission units of CO_2, fossil fuel, methane and nitrous oxide.

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The study, conducted for the EPS Molders Association, concluded that the superior thermal performance of structural insulated panels (SIPs) combined with critical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions offers the construction industry an excellent opportunity to significantly reduce global warming.

The Murus Company, Inc. is a leading manufacturer of structural insulated panels (SIPs), high performance building panels used for walls, floors, and roofs in residential and light commercial construction. SIPs are composite panels of interior and exterior structural sheathing with rigid, solid-core insulation.

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