

Don't Burn it Down → Build it Up

Timber Economic Options.

Science Facts and Analysis from Science for Georgia

In Georgia, over 8 million tons of pulp/residuals/wood chips processing capacity has been lost due to recent mill closures. These closing leave timber without customers for an important component of the timber economy. The main cause for mills closing is recycled cardboard eliminating the need for new-material cardboard. There are solutions that can be implemented to create opportunities for Georgians.

1. Right now: Conversion of closed mills to wood fiber insulation plants and replacement of plastic-based mulch with biodegradable mulch.
2. Mid-term: Encouragement of and investment in mass timber building materials and advanced packaging.
3. Long-term: R&D in advanced wood composite materials.

Of Note:

- Many people are recommending burning wood to create electricity [We do not recommend it as it is expensive, inefficient, and hazardous to the health of those in surrounding areas.](#)
- It takes [1.2 million tons of wood chips a year to make 100 megawatts](#) of energy. 8 million tons of excess pulpwood will produce ~666 MW total. Currently, Georgia Power has asked for an additional 14,000 MW of capacity.

For Pulpwood

Insulation -> A 'right now' solution

“[Wood](#) is a natural insulation.” Maine faced the same economic hurdle Georgia faces now with the closing of mills, and took this as an [opportunity](#) convert pulp mills to insulation mills – a solution that offers job security to rural Maine.

Needed inputs to create change:

- Support from Georgia to convert pulp mills to insulation mills
- Public awareness of the benefits of wood insulation over typical insulation
- Possible changes / updates to building codes

Agricultural Mulch -> a 'mid term' solution

Plastics are often used in agricultural mulch which creates the necessity of removal of the non-biodegradable material at the end of the growing season. Policy changes and consumer demand are driving a demand for non-plastic alternatives.

Development of “[fully](#) biodegradable paper mulches with controllable degradation rate, good barrier properties, and high mechanical strength” could create a market in Georgia that few could compete with.

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Needed inputs:

- Support to create manufacturing plants
- Public awareness of the benefits of biodegradable mulch
- Encouragement of use of wood-based mulch over plastic-based mulch
- Possible changes / updates to agricultural codes



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Packaging -> a 'mid-term' solution

Yes, cardboard and paper recycling have driven down demand for paper products from new wood, but there is still a market for packaging. Right now, plastic is used in a lot of packaging - which benefits oil companies. Georgia doesn't produce or drill oil, and many consumers don't want [plastic](#) near their food.

Interestingly, "The [original](#) cellophane produced by DuPont was a cellulose-based material (made from wood)." Replacement of plastic with paper products presents an opportunity for innovation – partnerships with the timber industry and our universities can move the needle.

Needed inputs:

- Encouragement of paper products as packaging (work with restaurant and retail store industries on food containers and bags)
- Here is a list of [24 Outstanding Paper Manufacturing Businesses in Georgia](#)



For Sawlogs / Lumber

Mass Timber -> a 'mid term' solution

Mass timber has many positives in the construction business:

- [Faster Construction](#)
- [Lighter weight](#) and more cost-effective building material compared to steel and concrete
- Creates jobs: engineering and construction jobs that stay in state
- [Less Temperature Sensitive](#)

Needed inputs:

- Investment in and encouragement of use of mass timber in construction
- Possible updated building codes
- Creation of a market? a DOT contract for [wooden highway sound barriers](#)



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Quick Overview (very basic) of Timber Lifecycle

The timber lifecycle has three basic stages and three basic outputs. Pulpwood processing is an important revenue stream for both the thinning and mature tree processing stages.

Stage	Pulpwood	Biomass	Sawlogs
Planting			
Thinning (approx. 10 yrs post planting)	X	X	
Mature Tree Harvest (approx. 10 yrs post thinning)	X	X	X

