

SHELTON-MASON COUNTY  
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## **Cantwell, Kilmer talk lumber in Shelton**

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As Olympic Panel Products in Shelton wraps up its final weeks of production before closing its doors, officials from another mill met at the same site to discuss the future of the timber industry.

Leaders from Sierra Pacific Industries, which is slated to open its doors at the Olympic Panel site and begin production in the coming months, hosted U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell and U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer for a roundtable talk about innovation in the lumber industry.

“This industry needs to be seen as more adaptable, and it has not been in the past,” said Bernard Bormann, Olympic Natural Resources Center director for the University of Washington School of Environmental and Forestry Sciences. Bormann was one of about a dozen industry experts, including Sierra Pacific officials, who tackled the topic at the roundtable.

One such innovation is cross-laminated timber, a large-scale, prefabricated wood panel similar to high-quality plywood that could be used in buildings to replace more expensive products. Cross-laminated timber, or CLT, has received attention for being less expensive and less carbon-intensive than alternative building products, and is lighter and easier to put up than steel or concrete.

Lumber mills could be built to produce CLT, which are healthier for the environment and ensure the lumber industry still has longevity.

However, there is both little demand for the CLT because those in the building industry aren't using it, and few facilities are producing it due to lack of demand, said Mark Emmerson, CFO and chairman of the board for Sierra Pacific.

Kilmer called the problem the "chicken or the egg challenge."

"So you have no demand and no facilities," he said. "What would it take to get you to create those facilities?"