

# Release

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



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## SCFC raises estimate of forestry's economic impact loss from flooding to \$100M

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission has raised its estimate of economic impact loss to the state's forest products industry from last year's historic flooding to \$100 million.

The agency derived its initial impact assessment of \$65 million in October 2015 from forest planting and inventory data, aerial surveillance, mill reports and consultations with foresters, loggers and landowners.

Since then, the commission has surveyed nearly twice as many mills in the roughly 20-county swath most affected by the flood in addition to collecting more extensive feedback and data from landowners and foresters in those areas.

The loss of access to roads, bridges and rail lines, higher operating costs for loggers, increased transportation costs for mills and overall lost productivity account for most of the economic loss. The primary impacts to the forestry sector include:

- lost manufacturing production and increased operating and wood supply costs;
- financial losses to loggers who could not work or who suffered extended downtime;
- damage to both public and private roads and bridges, which detoured or stopped truck traffic; and
- damaged or destroyed young pine stands.

“At the state level, this loss represents a very small part of the industry's \$18.6 billion annual contribution to the state's economy, but the flooding and continuous wet weather has taken a tremendous toll on the mills, loggers and landowners in the impacted areas,” said State Forester Gene Kodama. “The event is a reminder of the importance of maintaining a balanced supply of and demand for timber to keep the industry, its jobs and our forests healthy.”

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*The South Carolina Forestry Commission was among the many state agencies that responded to the October 2015 flooding by sending trained emergency professionals to the hardest-hit areas of the state. In addition to providing incident management teams that assisted counties with emergency operations, chainsaw crews cleared debris, and other employees staffed multiple emergency operations centers around the clock.*



This pine stand in Williamsburg County was inundated for weeks after the flooding; however, most mature forest stands can withstand short-term saturation. Seedlings under water for a week or more may not survive.