

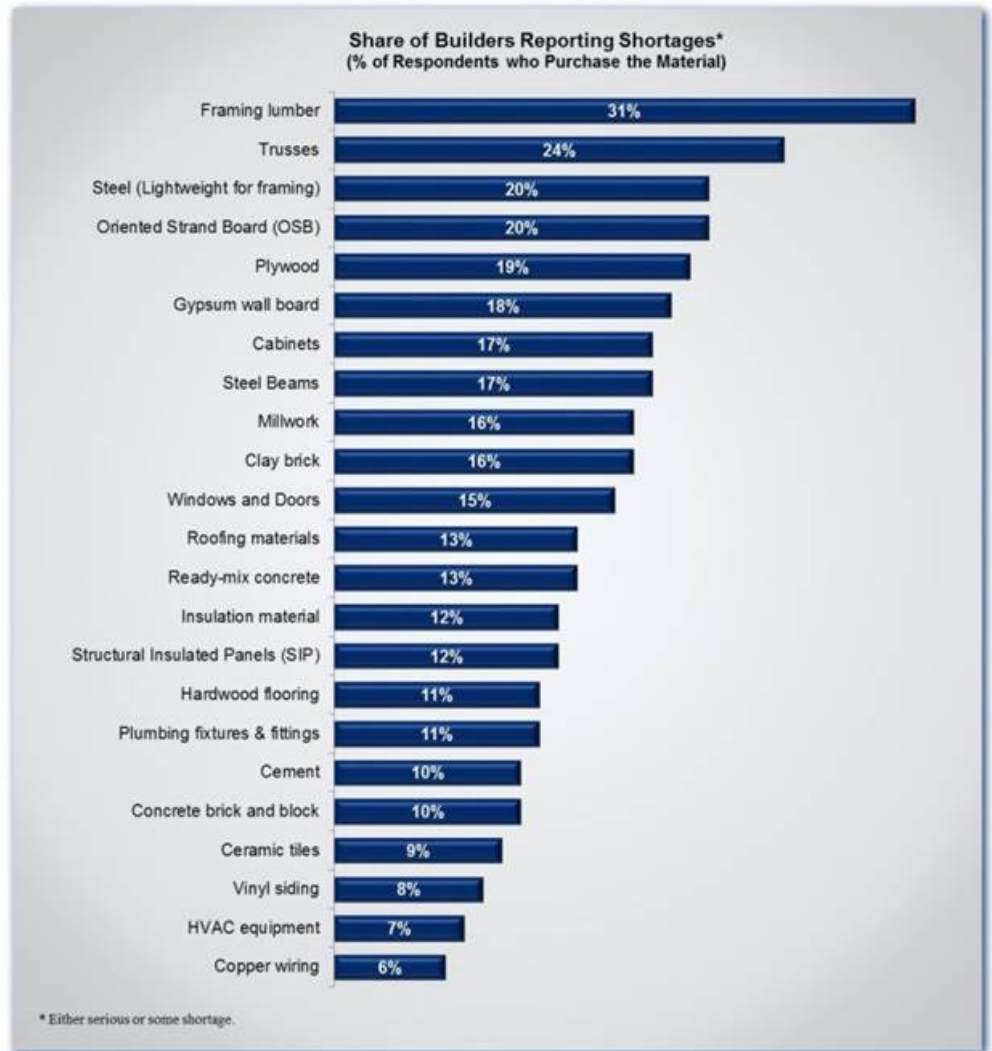
SENT TO LSU AGCENTER/LOUISIANA FOREST PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT CENTER - FOREST SECTOR / FORESTY PRODUCTS INTEREST GROUP



Number of Builders Reporting a Shortage of Framing Lumber Surges

BY [PAUL EMRATH](#) ON [JUNE 21, 2018](#)

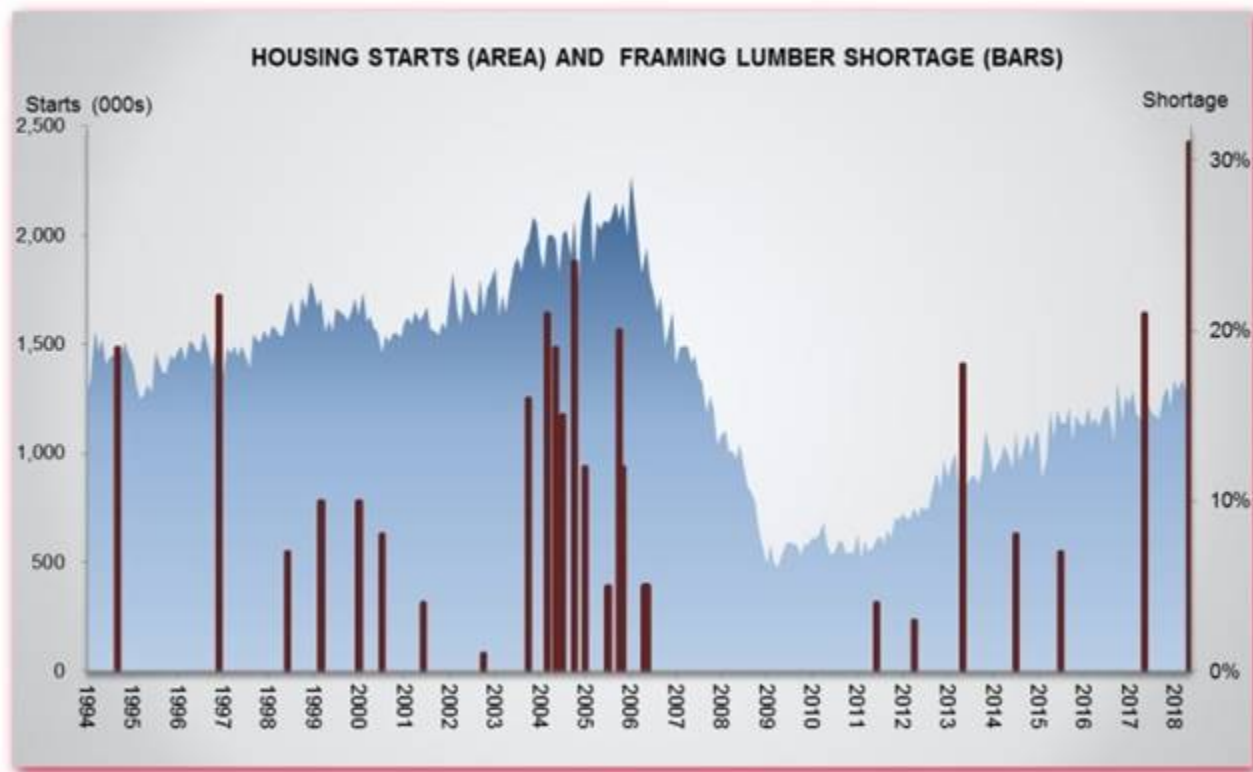
Shortages of framing lumber are now more widespread than at any time since NAHB began tracking the issue in a consistent way in 1994, according to results from the May 2018 survey for the [NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index](#). Over 30 percent of single-family builders responding to the survey’s special questions in May reported a shortage of framing lumber, outdistancing the other 22 listed building products and materials by a wide margin. In second place were trusses (with a shortage reported by 24 percent of builders), followed by lightweight steel and OSB (at 20 percent each) and plywood (at 19 percent). [Last year](#), the reported shortage percentages for these items were significantly lower—21 percent for framing lumber, and under 15 percent for all other products/materials.



It is probably not a coincidence that the top five items on the 2018 shortage list are made of [softwood lumber](#) or [steel](#), both of which have been targeted by the Administration with new import tariffs over the past year.

SENT TO LSU AGCENTER/LOUISIANA FOREST PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT CENTER - FOREST SECTOR / FORESTY PRODUCTS INTEREST GROUP

As noted above, the May 2018 reading of 31 percent is the highest the shortage percentage for framing lumber has been since NAHB incorporated the question into its HMI survey in September of 1994. Second highest was the 24 percent recorded in October of 2004. October 2004, however, was in the midst of a housing boom, when the annual rate of housing starts often exceeded 2 million—compared to the current rate of only about 1.3 million.



Although 31 percent is an all-time record for the framing lumber shortage percentage, in the past a few other building materials have experienced shortages that were even more widespread (a complete history for each material is available in the [full survey report](#)). In 1999 through 2001, for example, over 31 percent of builders were reporting shortages of clay brick, insulation, and gypsum wallboard. During the boom period of late 2003 through 2005, more than 31 percent at different times reported shortages of concrete, clay brick, lightweight steel, OSB and plywood. Builders also reported a relatively severe but short-lived scarcity of gypsum wallboard in May of 2006. The May 2018 result for framing lumber represents the most widespread shortage of any building material listed in the HMI survey since then.

Richard P. Vlosky, Ph.D.



21 June 2018



SENT TO LSU AGCENTER/LOUISIANA FOREST PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT CENTER - FOREST SECTOR / FORESTY PRODUCTS INTEREST GROUP
Director, Louisiana Forest Products Development Center
Crosby Land & Resources Endowed Professor of Forest Sector Business Development
Room 227, School of Renewable Natural Resources
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Phone (office): (225) 578-4527; Fax: (225) 578-4251; Mobile Phone: (225) 223-1931
Web Site: www.LFPDC.lsu.edu



President, Forest Products Society; President, WoodEMA i.a.

