

## Hardwood Federation Update The Farm Bill Moves Forward

*By Dana Lee Cole  
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Happy New Year from the Hardwood Federation team, and all the best in 2019! We're totally psyched for this New Year and our enthusiasm has been fueled by the events of December 2018.

### **The Farm Bill Moves Forward**

The second week of December was a big one for the wood products industry. The U.S. Senate and House both voted in favor of the conference report for the Agriculture Improvement Act (H.R. 2) — otherwise known as the Farm Bill.

The Senate acted first, passing the measure with a veto proof margin of 87-13. The House followed suit with a record vote of 369-47. (Fun fact: the previous record high House vote for a Farm Bill was 319!) And as we go to press, the legislation now heads to the President's desk for final approval.

Based on our preliminary review - the document is over 800 pages - it appears that we prevailed on all of our key Farm Bill advocacy priorities.

**MAP and FMD** - On trade, both the Market Access and Foreign Market Development Programs (MAP and FMD) are reauthorized and fully funded at \$200 million and \$34.5 million, respectively. The conference report takes the Senate's approach in repackaging the programs in a fashion where they will continue to operate as they have, but will be protected from arbitrary funding reductions that had threatened to eliminate the FMD program in particular.

A primary focus of our advocacy for the last two years, this is a big win for our sector. A big **Thank You** to all who participated in our fly-ins and weighed-in with your Members of Congress about the importance of these trade provisions, and their importance in opening up markets overseas for our products.

**Timber Innovation Act** - The conference report also includes the Senate's version of the Timber Innovation Act (TIA), a measure that promotes the use of wood in buildings higher than 6 stories. The provisions in the measure include both the research and development components of TIA, as well as the wood innovation grants piece. Again, we have been advocating the stronger Senate version to prevail in conference negotiations, and are pleased to see this outcome.

**And** - The conference committee accepted the House's version of the **Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program**. This program is authorized to receive \$125 million over the life of this Farm Bill to facilitate installations of heat and power systems that operate on sawmill residual-derived fuels. This effort has also been a focus of the Hardwood Federation as a potential solution to our sector's residuals issue.

To all who aided us in our efforts, Thank you! Without your letters, phone calls, personal meetings and PAC assistance, your Hardwood Federation team would not have been successful in moving this bill across the finish line.