

Hardwood Federation Update What a Fly-In!!!

*By Dana Lee Cole
Hardwood Federation Executive Director*

Despite the threatening weather, Hurricane Florence did not stop the Hardwood Federation (HF) from hosting our biggest event in our nearly 20 year history. And although we proceeded as planned, we very much kept in mind the devastation so many of our friends and peers in coastal areas suffered during and after Florence. We continue to keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

What a Fly-In!!!

Eighty three (83) hardwood industry leaders and representatives from across the country attended events held from September 11 -13 – far and away our largest number of attendees ever. Participants were a great mix of knowledgeable Fly-In veterans and eager new faces. And as planned, we stormed the Hill in small groups, and visited as many congressional offices as possible, to make a real difference! (**What a great turnout from the HMA's NextGen Leaders Council and the NWFA's Emerging Leaders groups.**)

Attendance wasn't the only record to be broken. A total of 123 meetings were conducted. Our groups met with 45 Senate offices, nearly a fifth of all Representatives, plus important Administration meetings with U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, senior staff and advisors at the Department of Commerce, and the Chief Economist to Vice President Mike Pence. Much more than an average day on the Hill!

What was our Message?

We focused on two significant and complicated issues. Regarding **trade**, our message was simple:

- We asked that the Trump Administration return to the negotiating table as soon as possible. The hardwood industry relies on export markets for its survival, and Trade is having a devastating impact on hardwood sawmills.
- In 2017, U.S. hardwood producers shipped \$4.04 billion worth of U.S. products to global markets; \$2.09 billion to Greater China. China, the NAFTA countries and the E.U. make up 82% of hardwood exports. In 2017, the U.S. had a trade surplus of \$1.475 billion in hardwood lumber, up from \$1.1 billion in 2015.
- The 10-25% retaliatory tariffs by China on U.S. hardwood exports hurts U.S. hardwood companies, workers and consumers and causes long term damage to international markets. If this downward spiral continues, countless jobs will be lost, companies closed, and local economies dependent on hardwood mill operations will erode.
- We asked that the Trump Administration return to active, high level negotiations with the Chinese government and work towards swift resolution of differences, a return to certainty and stability in the global marketplace, and pursuit of stringent enforcement of existing safeguards against unfair trade practices.

Regarding the reauthorization of the **Farm Bill** by September 30, our message was that the Hardwood Federation supports re-authorization of the Farm Bill and advocates for the following Farm Bill programs:

- Full funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program in the 2018 Farm Bill;
- New categorical exclusions from NEPA in the House bill that will facilitate federal forest management;
- The Timber Innovation Act provisions in the Farm Bill to develop new markets for wood products using Cross Laminated Timber.

Other Fly-In events

Several HF Political Action Committee (HFPAC) events provided additional opportunities to speak directly with and acknowledge the support of Congressional Members. The evening reception of September 12 was attended by thirty-five (35) Republican members of Congress. The next morning, seventeen (17) Democrats joined us for breakfast. These events provided an outstanding opportunity to reconnect with friends on the Hill, and establish new relationships.

Thank you all for making this the best Fly-in to date. And to everyone reading this, I encourage you to join us for next year's event. For more information, please contact the Hardwood Federation at (202) 463-2705.