

Hardwood Federation Update from Dana Lee Cole

Last week, the Hardwood Federation team, along with John Foley, BPM Lumber, Orn Gudmundsson, Northland Corp., and Matthew Netterville, Netterville Lumber, met with members of the Trump Administration, specifically Chief Agriculture Negotiator, Ambassador Gregg Doud and Gilbert Kaplan, Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, to discuss how the current trade dispute with China is impacting U.S. hardwood businesses. (Both Ambassador Doud and the Under Secretary are part of the negotiating team and are directly involved in talks with their Chinese counterparts.)

Included in the discussions:

- *The importance of including economic benefits for hardwood in any final trade agreement with China
- *Hardwood economic data - provided by the American Hardwood Export Council
- *How the industry has been impacted by the trade war and difficulty securing lines of credit
- *How hardwood exports to China support the entire industry, domestic and foreign
- *The importance of the hardwood industry to rural communities
- *The omission of hardwood from USDA relief programs

The Hardwood Federation's take-away was that both Ambassador Doud and Under Secretary Kaplan were sincerely moved by the information; and realize the significant and devastating consequences the trade disruptions have had (and continue to have) on our industry.

Also, Trade is being handled exclusively by the Trump Administration. It is clear the Administration is very committed to seeing these negotiations through, and that there are conversations every day with China. **However**, there are no promises regarding timing or what a final deal will look like.

Bottom Line: Meeting with the individuals directly involved in the negotiations was/is important to raise awareness of the impacts on the industry, to educate them on the severity of the situation for many businesses, and to continue the dialog with contacts made.

It is also important that over the last few weeks, USDA, Commerce, USTR and the Executive Office –the groups that work together on trade strategy - have heard our consistent message, via hardwood leaders and the Hardwood Federation, and have a common baseline to refer to regarding the hardwood industry. ([Click here](#) for an editorial that appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, written by Orn Gudmundsson.)

The Hardwood Federation will continue to identify leaders within the Administration who have a role in the trade debate...and will work to arrange meetings with them. Please direct questions to Hardwood Federation Executive Director, Dana Lee Cole, at (202) 463-2705.