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## Politics and Policy in the new Administration

On the dais at HMA's National Conference and Expo was Hardwood Federation (HF) Executive Director, Dana Lee Cole. In addition to a recap of HF 2016 activities, her "**Washington Update**" presentation included an overview of the 2016 November election results, and then detail of the Federation's priority issues for 2017 and 2018.

### Republicans Dominate

**Red** is the dominating color, from Pennsylvania Avenue down to the State level:

- ❖ White House – Donald Trump
- ❖ U.S. Senate – Lost 2 seats, retain majority 52-48
- ❖ U.S. House – Retain majority 237-193
- ❖ U.S. Governors - 33 Republican, 16 Democrat, 1 Independent
- ❖ State Legislatures - 67 Republican, 31 Democrat

And as was expected, the Trump Administration is indeed making waves in the areas of Tax and Regulatory Reform, Infrastructure, Trade and other areas of importance.

That said, the Hardwood Federation - representing 27 hardwood trade associations and organizations, and true to its mission - will interact with both sides of the aisle, and educate Congress, the Administration, and Department Staff about the issues that most impact the hardwood industry in the U.S. The "President has broad powers, but Congress can pass legislation that can rein in those powers."

### HF 2017 Priority Issues

While not new topics, but definitely issues of great importance to the hardwood industry, the Administration and Congress will continue to hear from the Federation on:

- **Federal Forest Management** – as we work with our existing coalition to sharpen our approach on moving legislation forward.
- **Tax and Regulatory Reform** - as we work to withdraw the proposed increases on the estate tax, plus focus on small business regulatory and tax reform efforts that support the hardwood industry.
- **Farm Bill** – With the current Farm Bill due to expire in 2018, we are already meeting with our industry partners to prepare strategies for maintaining and improving current programs that support the industry, like the export promotion programs.

- **Biomass** - We will continue to work to get a federal policy that explicitly acknowledges that biomass energy, from sustainably managed forests, does not contribute carbon to the atmosphere.
- **Trade** - As an industry that benefits greatly from export markets - and one that also suffers from unfair competition from hardwood imports - we will be working with the Administration and Congress to communicate our issues on this matter, and to advise them that trade is an extremely complicated issue that cannot be adequately addressed with "one-size-fits-all" national policy.

In closing, Dana thanked HMA for both the opportunity to participate in this year's National Conference and Expo, and for HMA's ongoing support of the Hardwood Federation. She was also most appreciative of the individual HMA member donations to the HF Political Action Committee (PAC). These funds will be used to support the members of Congress that support the hardwood industry's policy positions.