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Hardwood Federation Update

By Dana Lee Cole

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Election 2020 is over! And regardless of how your preferred candidates fared, we as a country will go on. As we all contemplate 2021, please know that the Hardwood Federation remains dedicated to advocating for federal policies that help sustain and grow the Hardwood Industry in the United States, no matter who sits in the White House or speaks from the House or Senate floor.

Regarding the Election, it was a much tighter race than expected. As we go to press:

- It appears, but not yet confirmed by a formal vote of the Electoral College (scheduled for December 14), that former Vice-President Joe Biden will be sworn in as the **46th President**.
- In the **U.S. House of Representatives**, Republicans unexpectedly gained seats. Democrats will retain control of the House; however they will have the smallest majority since World War II, which will make for some interesting policy maneuvering for their leadership.
- The **Senate** will remain in Republican hands - although only very narrowly - until at least early January when both Georgia Senate seats head for a run-off election. Election trends and history seem to point to Republicans maintaining at least one, and probably both seats, but this is not a guarantee in the least. (It is anticipated that it will be the most expensive Senate race in history.)

Keep in mind that whoever controls the Senate, the party's margin will be very slim. In order to move any legislation, some compromise on both sides will be necessary. Most likely we will again be working with a split government, with both parties exerting some control over pieces of the legislative process.

For the Hardwood Federation staff, the first order of business in the new year will be to connect with new Members of Congress - and the Administration - to educate them about the U.S. hardwood industry, and its contributions to the economy at both state and federal levels. (We have at least 7 new U.S. Senators and roughly two dozen new House members to touch base with.)

We also need to re-connect with returning Committee Chairs, plus make ourselves known to new leadership. Identifying those in positions to help us, what points of agreement exist, and who we need to win over to our way of thinking are at the top of our to-do list. As we look ahead ...

Three House members, very familiar with our industry, are vying for Collin Peterson's post as Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture. Representative Jim Costa (D-CA-16), a moderate who always comes to the Hardwood Federation Fly-In breakfast, knows us well. Likewise, Representatives Marcia Fudge (D-OH-11) and David Scott (D-GA-13) are both from big hardwood states and knowledgeable about hardwood issues.

Should the **Republicans** maintain control in the Senate:

- John Boozman (R-AR) is on track to replace the retiring Pat Roberts as Chair of the Agriculture Committee. Senator Boozman is a longtime friend of the hardwood industry and would make a fantastic choice to lead this key panel.

- On the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, Senator John Barasso (R-WY) is slated to replace Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), who is ending her term as Chair. This committee is critical for us, as it takes the lead on federal forest management and most natural resource policy issues.

Should **Democrats** take control, Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) will most likely return to head up Agriculture, and Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) would serve as Chair of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee. The Federation has great connections with both, and have worked with them and their staffs over the last several years.

Bottom Line: The Hardwood Federation will continue to work across the aisles in our nation's Capital to: a) move legislation that supports the U.S. hardwood industry, and b) defend against policies that threaten to harm our sector. As always, thank you for your support! And here's to a better year for us all!