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Policy Priorities in Washington

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Addressing the ongoing human and economic impacts of the COVID-19 virus tops the priority list for the President and his team. With multiple vaccines having been developed, and more on the horizon, implementing policies and strategies that increase the rate of inoculation for the entire U.S. population are high priority items, as is providing economic support to individuals and businesses that continue to struggle as significant portions of the economy remain shuttered.

Longer term, the Administration has made it clear that **climate change** will be a centerpiece agenda item throughout this term, incorporating climate considerations across government agencies and departments. This is a challenge certainly. It is also an opportunity for the entire wood products industry - including hardwoods - to present itself as part of the **solution** to climate change concerns, having many tools at its disposal including sustainable management and harvest of forest lands, carbon neutral energy fuels, and carbon sequestering products.

There are indications that the new Administration is open to some of the solutions the Hardwood Federation has promoted over the years, including wood energy, wood product innovation and green building. We will certainly be looking for opportunities to work closely with our forest products allies to further educate decision makers in the coming months.

Hardwood Federation Priorities

At their annual winter meeting in February, the Hardwood Federation Board of Directors, which includes HMA members Troy Brown, Tommy Petzoldt and Bob Miller, tasked the Federation staff with identifying strategies to maximize our impact on the Hill and within the Administration. And a Task Force has been named that will help develop these efforts. Priorities include:

- Developing documents that clearly and concisely communicate how the hardwood industry benefits both the economy and the environment
- Outreach to and discussions with key lawmakers
- Proactively providing input to regulatory and legislative proposals related to carbon control
- Providing industry members the opportunity to engage

Additionally, the Federation team will not stray from the long-time policy positions that support the hardwood industry, including maintaining and increasing access to timber on federal (and private) lands, tax and regulatory policies that support, not harm, business operations, and fair-trade agreements that open global markets to our products.

Note: The policy positions were confirmed as important by a survey of the hardwood industry, conducted in January, and presented to the Hardwood Federation and Hardwood Federation PAC Boards of Directors at their February meeting.

Bottom Line

The Hardwood Federation Boards are committed to maintaining a vigorous presence on Capitol Hill, even if it is via computer screens. And the Hardwood Federation team will be directly engaged and carefully tracking developments, on all fronts, that have impacts on our hardwood businesses. Also know that:

- We will look for ways to work with the new Administration and Congressional leaders but will not hesitate to challenge proposals that we believe will be harmful to the industry.
- Our elected officials will continue to hear from us about the value of our industry to the U.S. economy, and why it is important they make the right decisions on proposals impacting our companies...and why the wrong decisions can devastate our industry.

Thank you, HMA!

The Hardwood Federation team is very grateful for HMA's tremendous engagement and support of Federation activities, at all levels. And we very much look forward to working with your delegates on our Board of Directors.