



Hardwood Federation Updates for July 2022

by Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director, Hardwood Federation

Ocean Shipping Reform Crosses the Finish Line!

As predicted, in mid-June, Congress voted for final passage of the “Ocean Shipping Reform Act” when the House approved the final bill with an overwhelming majority. On June 16, President Biden signed the bill at the White House, making the law official. The bill is notable for the strong bipartisan support it received in both the House and Senate. The Hardwood Federation Political Action Committee is proud to have supported all the bill’s main sponsors: Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN); Senator John Thune (R-SD); Representative John Garamendi (D-CA); and Representative Dusty Johnson (R-SD). And the Hardwood Federation will continue engaging in next steps related to the law’s implementation, especially as it relates to upcoming federal guidelines that will prevent an ocean carrier from refusing cargo—including hardwood products—for export.

House Lawmakers Introduce “Bat Bill,” Promote Forest Management

On June 16, Representatives Bruce Westerman (R-AR) and Pete Stauber (R-MN) introduced the “Endangered Species Flexibility Act”—also known as the “Bat Bill”—that would create common-sense guard rails around the scope of endangered species regulations. The bill would prevent an “uplisting” of the Northern Long Eared Bat” (NLEB) from “threatened” to “endangered”—a step that would shut down logging in most of the continental U.S. The bill also would shore up the HF’s advocacy and [comments](#) on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s proposed rule to re-designate the NLEB as “endangered,” triggering a variety of land-use restrictions that would hinder the industry.

USDA Puts Industry Priorities into Writing

Also in June, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack signed an Executive Memo, titled “Climate Resilience and Carbon Stewardship of America’s National Forests and Grasslands.” In the document, USDA noted they fully recognize:

- The need to harvest federal forest lands to sustain forest health and prevent extreme wildfires;
- The importance of forest products to forest-based solutions to carbon in the atmosphere; and
- The need to employ science-based decision making in developing and implementing policies to promote climate resilience.

The memo also confirms USDA’s commitment to protecting old growth and mature forest lands (while acknowledging that the vast majority are already protected under current regulations and rules), and fighting wildfires, as well as wildlife and watershed protection and conservation. The Hardwood Federation will be analyzing the full text of the memo to assess the potential impacts on the U.S. hardwood industry. Read the USDA announcement [here](#).