

November 1, 2020

Presidential Campaign Reach Out

By Dana Lee Cole

Hardwood Federation Executive Director

I wanted you to be aware that in September, the Hardwood Federation Board of Directors sent letters to the Trump and Biden campaign committees outlining our hardwood industry priorities for 2021. These letters served as a notice to the candidates and their teams, and will also serve as a starting point for building our 2021 legislative agenda for the 117th Congress, which will be seated in January.

In our letters, we said ...

"On behalf of the 1.8 million, mostly rural jobs directly and indirectly supported by the hardwood industry, we, the members of the Hardwood Federation, write to outline federal legislative policy proposal recommendations to support this vital, rurally-based business sector which contributes significantly to the U.S. economy.

The U.S. hardwood sector is a fully integrated industry – from logging to manufacturing finished consumer goods - including flooring, cabinets, furniture and mouldings. And the tissue and paper supplies made of residual chips and dust from our mills, along with the industrial mats, shipping pallets and railway ties made from hardwood lumber, are crucial to the significant economic recovery we face now, and will continue to face in 2021.

We appreciate the historic financial support the U.S. government has provided to the hardwood industry, particularly the generous funding provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to grow international markets for U.S. hardwoods through programs available within the Foreign Agricultural Service division. **However**, there is much more that can and should be done to contribute to the long-term success of a uniquely American industry that has been hit hard by the devastation caused by the COVID-19 virus.

The Hardwood Federation recommends the following to incoming leaders:

- Enter into international agreements that promote free and fair global trade systems and grow the demand for U.S. hardwoods around the world.
- Maintain and increase USDA funding that supports growing global markets for U.S. hardwood and hardwood products, specifically USDA's Foreign Market Development Program and Market Access Program.
- Implement policies that promote and foster strong domestic markets for U.S. hardwood and hardwood products including new funding to research the environmental and home health benefits of hardwood products.
- Support public and private green building initiatives by extending a sustainable tax credit to building and construction projects, including U.S. wood products used in these projects.
- Increase government purchases of U.S. structural and finished wood products for federal building and transportation projects, and for U.S. military truck beds.
- Recognize the benefits and fully fund the programs that support active forest management on federal and private forest lands, including sustainable timber harvest, restoration, maintenance of forest roads and fire prevention.
- Finalize the EPA rule recognizing combustion of biomass derived from sustainably managed forests as carbon neutral. Forest based biomass is renewable and

sustainable, and bioenergy produced from biomass helps keep our forestlands as forests, and not converted to other non-growing uses.

- Expand and maintain tax policies that support small and medium sized businesses, including lowering the Estate Tax and making permanent the pass-through deduction enacted as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).
- Fully fund and enforce the Lacey Act, which was amended in 2008 to combat illegal logging around the globe. The Hardwood Federation actively supported this amendment and is committed to fair, equitable and legal trade in forest products.”

One thing is certain going forward ...

Regardless of who wins the White House and who controls Congress, the 2021 Hardwood Federation team will be ready to promote the federal policy priorities of the industry at the highest levels of government!

We'll be scrupulous in our efforts to remain bipartisan - supporting those Members of Congress that support us. We'll strive to work with the White House Administration on issues of common ground. And we'll push back, should proposed policies have negative consequences for our businesses and employees.

2020 has been an extraordinary year! Here's to brighter and more stable times for the hardwood industry, and the entire U.S. economy!