

April 1, 2021

Advocacy and Representation at NatCon 2021

Established in 2004, and representing 28 U.S. hardwood trade associations and organizations, the Hardwood Federation (HF) is the voice of the hardwood industry in Washington, monitoring and weighing in on federal legislation and policy, and educating Congress, the Administration and Department staff about the issues that most impact the hardwood businesses in the U.S.

On the dais of HMA's recent National Conference and Expo was Hardwood Federation Executive Director, Dana Lee Cole. In her presentation entitled, "**Advocacy and Representation**," Cole provided insider insight regarding the current atmosphere and challenges in Washington. Great information to have after such a tumultuous year!

Does Advocacy matter?

In the current political landscape, advocacy matters more than ever! The balance of power is very tight. As new laws are being introduced and debated, it is important that the hardwood perspective is being heard loud and clear, especially since there are between 11,000 and 12,000 federally registered lobbyists working Capitol Hill - all trying to make their voices heard! Plus, Congress is not a static entity. Elected representatives change, as does the balance of power.

- There are 435 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are ALL up for election every two years. There are 100 Members of the Senate. **One third** is up for re-election every two years. In short, people come and go. Balance of power changes.
- In the House, there are 21 Standing Committees and 104 Subcommittees. In the Senate, there are 20 Standing Committees and 71 Subcommittees. There are also 5 Joint Committees with members of both the House and Senate. (And there are thousands of paid professionals vying for their support.)

Countering the Naysayers

Now that climate change is a centerpiece issue on the new Administration's agenda, the Federation's advocacy efforts will be more essential than ever in order to counter the cries from environmental interests that forests should be "preserved," not managed and utilized. (Remember, people lobbying AGAINST the hardwood industry are active and engaged!)

Yet, with hardwood's significant environmental credentials, HF sees this as an opportunity to present our industry as part of the solution to climate change concerns. And work has already begun.

- HF Staff has begun reaching out to and meeting with key Administration and Hill contacts including: USDA Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Senior Climate Advisor, Robert Bonnie; Acting USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Chris French; Senate Environment and Ag, Nutrition & Forestry Committee members, and House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee members.
- And there are indications that the new Administration is open to some of the solutions HF has promoted over the years, including wood energy, wood product innovation and green building.

Your role as an industry stakeholder

Be informed and join the effort. Know what your state government and Congress are proposing or planning to implement. Look for opportunities to be part of the discussion. Make your voice heard. Meet with your elected officials. Respond to HF 'Calls to Action.' Attend HF meetings. The Hardwood Federation is your advocate in Washington, and your support is needed and appreciated.