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Hardwood Federation Industry Tidbits | September 2023

by Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director, Hardwood Federation

As Senate and House lawmakers return to Washington, now's the time to contact your federal officials and echo the Hardwood Federation's key asks:

- **Hardwood Access & Education Program (HAP)** | Establishing a hardwood education program, in the farm bill for example, kills two birds with one stone. It helps grow jobs in rural communities and it improves the environment. (HAP also will give the industry much needed data to support sustainable forest management and the positive benefits of using wood products in home and workspaces, and push back on false narratives.)
- **USDA Export Promotion** | Downsizing USDA's export promotion programs would impede our ability to export sustainably harvested hardwoods around the world, and lead to customers choosing less sustainable and legally harvested alternatives.
- **Taxes** | Congress must make permanent 100% expensing of industrial equipment and the 20% deduction for small business. Congress should also restore full deductibility of business expenses.
- **Transportation** | Congress must pass a "supply chain package" that creates flexibility for truck weights, grows the pool of drivers, and expedites implementation of ocean shipping reforms.

USDA Offers Wildfire Defense Grants

In late July, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will accept applications for the [Community Wildfire Defense Grant](#) program. This competitive grant program directly supports the USFS's 10-year strategy to treat up to 20 million acres of national forests and grasslands, and 30 million acres of other federal, state, Tribal and private lands to reduce wildfire risk. USFS will accept applications through October 31, 2023.

Industry Advocates Use of Hardwood Sustainability Data Accounting

On August 10, the Federation submitted comments to the USDA responding to its Request for Information (RFI) related to a federal strategy that will more accurately measure and monitor greenhouse gas emissions and capture for the agriculture and forest sectors.

The Federation used the opportunity to showcase the sustainability benefits of hardwood products, citing recent Environmental Product Declarations for hardwood flooring as examples, and to continue advocacy for authorization of a Forest Products Laboratory study that will quantify the amount of carbon stored in wood products.

Although USDA stated that the current RFI will not necessarily result in a formal rulemaking as a next step, it will inform efforts across the federal government to gather data related to carbon accounting programs.