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| **Hardwood Federation – August 2023 Newsletter** |

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| **From the Executive Director: *New “Study” Questions Wood Product Sustainability***The hardwood industry, and indeed the entire wood products industry sector, has long fought an uphill battle to better inform the general public, the media, and government policy makers about the sustainability and environmental friendliness of using wood in all its amazing applications. Unfortunately, just when we seem to be making progress, another questionable report comes out that is touted by those who would prefer that our forestlands remain untouched and unmanaged. The World Resource Institute (WRI) is the latest organization to strike. The WRI recently released a study challenging scientific and public policy claims that the wood products industry is a low or neutral emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG).  Some of the key assertions of the study include:* Current and future demand for Wood Products undermines efforts to reduce GHG Emissions
* Between 2010 and 2050, annual wood harvests are expected to release three times more carbon dioxide than the global aviation industry.
* Three million square miles of forestland are expected to be “razed” (the size of the continental U.S.).
* Massive accounting gap in global greenhouse gas production; netting carbon losses from new harvests with carbon sequestration from growth of broad forest areas is “inappropriate” and give a false impression of low, zero or even negative greenhouse gas emissions from wood harvests.
* *On one hand*, recently harvested trees cannot be included in carbon accounting because you cannot guarantee those forests would have continued to grow.
* *Yet on the other hand*, they claim current growth can be attributed to past harvest and land clearing.

The Hardwood Federation is in close contact with our industry allies working to put together a strategy to address this claim.  As a first step, our friends at the National Alliance of Forest Owners developed some talking points to use with any members of Congress that may have questions.  Key points include:* The study ignores robust, well-established body of science showing the opposite of their claim.
* Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated, in contradiction to the report’s authors, that “in the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fiber or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.”
* Eliminating forest harvest is not the solution to healthy, vibrant forests. Harvesting on National Forests in Washington state was shut down for 30 years in the 1990s. Forests were free of direct human activity and management. What happened? Compared to private lands in Washington state, national forests are growing half as much and 70% is lost to mortality.
* Cherry-picking science is dangerous. The authors use international forestry data from specific regions to conclude for all forests globally, misrepresented forestry harvest emissions, and underrepresented the sequestration values of replanting and managing forests.
* In the U.S., we don’t cut and move on. We replant, regrow, and regenerate in a never-ending cycle. Private forest owners **grow 43% more trees** than they harvest each year.
* Felling a tree does not cause an emission. The carbon goes from being in a live, standing tree, to a log, then to a product.

While these and other facts can be used in response, it is clear from past debate that direct response from the industry is often viewed as self-serving and does not move the needle in the court of public opinion. Fortunately, some scholars in the forest economics and modelling community have begun to respond to the study. For example, on August 8 by Brent Sohngen, a professor of environmental and resource economics at The Ohio State University, published a blog posting entitled “Why Global Wood Harvests Aren’t Emitting 3.5 to 4.2 Gt CO2 Per Year in Net Emissions,”  Professor Sohngen pushed back on a number of statements made in the WRI study including the following: * The authors’ claimed carbon cost of harvesting depends on “a counterfactual that assumes no harvesting at all,” and “their approach and model makes no sense.”
* “They acknowledge economics is hard, so they ignore it, and instead deploy a set of arbitrary rules to consume wood, harvest trees, and regenerate trees.”
* Thus, “their key result that there are 3.5 to 4.2 Gt CO2 in net emissions from wood harvesting is ridiculous.”
* More specifically, Professor Sohngen states that the authors get to their key result through multiple technical errors, including:
	+ “First, they ignore economics and construct a purely biophysical model. This will result in overestimating harvests and underestimating regrowth …”
	+ “Second, the WRI study is just an implementation of the incorrect argument by Searchinger et al. (2009) that emissions from timber harvesting and burning should be double counted. . . . Searchinger’s argument is wrong. Double counting emissions, in contradiction to the correct approach by the IPCC, leads to fewer not more forests.”
	+ “Third, WRI is making a normative judgment . . . to ignore tree growth before harvesting. This convention is different from every other forest sector model.” (And this greatly overstates the carbon impacts of harvesting.)
	+ “Fourth, their approach to discounting is just strange . . . [and] amplifies their results and ignores how markets respond . . .”
	+ “Fifth, their counterfactual is unrealistic, and not just because it assumes no harvesting of wood.” The problem also is that they run “a scenario of no harvesting of wood without considering the market response.”

You may read more from the WRI report here: [here.](https://www.wri.org/insights/wood-harvests-overlooked-carbon-costs)You may read Professor Sohngen full post [here.](https://u.osu.edu/forest/)Of course, more scholars, scientists and environmentalists need to come out and push back on this flawed reasoning and we are hopeful more such work is in the pipeline. We will continue to work closely with our allies and double our efforts to share the facts about the wood products industry with policy leaders in D.C. Hopefully the talking points about will allow you to push back on your local level as well.**Issues:** **Farm Bill Update** Content TBD. ***House Lawmakers Spotlight Firefighter Pay, Broader Forest Management Issues***As the September 30 deadline rapidly approaches to fund the federal government with no compromise on the near horizon, Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) is raising concerns that wild firefighter pay raises from 2023 will lapse, resulting in an automatic 50% pay cut for frontline defense of forestland and fire-prone communities. Within two weeks of returning from recess, Congress faces the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 funding authority on September 30 and potential suspension of many federal operations. Unless lawmakers strike a budget deal for FY 2024 or a stopgap measure known as “Continuing Resolution,” the lapse in 2023 budget authority could trigger a significant walk-out from workers tasked with combatting wildfires during the height of the season. Rep. Simpson (R-ID), who chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment, warned representatives of the wood products industry earlier this year that budgetary pressures could result in deep cuts for essential programs. In the case of firefighter pay, he stated that Congress should use a “scalpel and not a cleaver” when looking for budget savings. While Rep. Simpson has discussed funding issues during recess, on August 11, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR) conducted an outdoor [field hearing](https://u19539728.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=-2B73de0dREQUDGWQfTM3mhtlgRadfVoSZ8Xw9PgCY7U9F8uEFVckFfNKY4IbK4YlqDHpDLRVJumDppWab1IBgOQtvGXQFcg2G73uCz68TOeutvMLAlh6rH71NcVVo5-2FAe4eCX_DfShkWCAhoLGP-2FJNrdlPJdV-2FLULhdq7A2Mns4NO8kAbKoy2hBWCjup-2FdSJ4mtav3QZgwkC4yOhBCK4lj-2B12aQm1tCysqlliTnar61N-2FVIXTzUg4tSSmbBe0ElpGy-2FCQPtvfuguwsRWkMM9tfpS1ZlW-2BI-2B3yZIETbd-2BRBtRFA-2F16-2FF7ibJdCLSTkkuc5ZaK9PJvRAP7QhY8lnmp8DJ8WVLQYw3YKHRkZJai-2B2a1PfyocJu-2BzuAdY-2Bca-2BB0Xp5BFMXL5-2BH8vreGoiFD0lCP3HWCn1VM6-2FXrkkHpPdAtsYXs6lggp9ugSpfh-2BROn9clnQjHdTFbXsDy5sOvlhq5Jfl54LtGlnuf0mvDAALQMc2TfZcBqA3Bf7OHvhfTonQbqgYi-2FBA-2FD2VMiOGP0KCzDNVxyhgCEg49kgt9aDI7IJahdXB0IoK4XXa-2FUzIkVHoLbbD3Z-2FEFG5WUkMZRqfbgC-2BM0x13iD5J7-2BY9BfeFZ0D3OD6hmZz-2FIF6DGC9IZ5ITMWTSbXgOz2rTu32APZg2wIC-2BOwgUdCX9BdsDnQla9VRjdExLWFnpOKgmsZ2qGZAkL-2BV4u) at Yosemite National Park  to spotlight active forest management and wildfire risk.  Chairman Westerman called on witnesses will ranging from recreational service operators in the Yosemite region to representatives from the California Farm Bureau and cattlemen groups, all giving perspectives on the different ways that misguide environmental policies contribute to catastrophic wildfires.**USDA Offers Wildfire Defense Grants**As Congress spotlights policies demonstrating the relationship between funding, forest management and wildfire risk, the USDA is offering practical tools to public and private stakeholders. On July 31, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the USFS will accept applications for the [Community Wildfire Defense Grant program](https://u19539728.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=-2B73de0dREQUDGWQfTM3mhi8zaIYsCM5ySTcgcPWav6Sip7P-2B-2FK-2BpaIvWPG837jzYnRqY0z-2BG9eBIqdnfPmdz-2FfWe-2FCNJoJ5-2BRIU-2Fa3rExQMe-2F5GuJdk0Z7oIQFRf14Pp5Py8yVw47WhyNOFI91t5CosugWAKZTo59MshRdCLQ92lo24sSW78KhHkqrQ-2FY2xd4B3oF91WWEpha-2BrUSfQGvDm0vIQxZ23Q27FDyhOxx1J0Y2kI8kjVicrBEOvm0tLSXzFEeRipZHPm2l6wSQPQLg-2B9AMdznTOQUAK5RYgW-2Bohe098l0o4yRse4D-2BfNvPEjP51pICSybYOJSThQ2wnv-2FmQ1LPB8kAE5fBureajMWtlzc0IzCDm-2BMBR17vo6jY5lzt-2FklrxCL6KmfmZ7UM-2BgV1XtqXnPV-2F7j9WcaRq4DjxmvtRUZBcWF-2FbEXcJhdep5edeEraxbCGS2w5Pa7oOqv-2BA-3D-3DQn-r_DfShkWCAhoLGP-2FJNrdlPJdV-2FLULhdq7A2Mns4NO8kAbKoy2hBWCjup-2FdSJ4mtav3QZgwkC4yOhBCK4lj-2B12aQmSu-2FUlRK9TGpVMbbW-2FFgW0wZhOs5ba3xvFzI6uJHj-2BwJ8G-2FkzG3EZmQ-2FxqoeBl-2F3NvED5j4NdzwJY3HbHgwMU3-2Bf7dWUfqctGEL4YM2-2Bge5pX-2B7zdsObaITv5BPabIQBgiNaviZeiI2FNJPFJMUOP585X-2BJCF32fczOgce50IeepoQmd-2Bd-2FTFlXsMle9Yoz6TimD21ia60zMvXCxLtxEmZ5mo4zPRWyEk-2BaLiEJeLel1H1yHQGKjjYw0a07fQgeu4tZf58gOz9gTHEOCdWT0aRW9LLtwlTgGtshGIJpK3925cbDNEckB0XyzHBhXE6MsrpNUKRBK97PsOgYgS3W0UmG-2BKAjgN8wbJ1-2BpWZjZC19khUBz51V59-2BUKI-2FP3-2Bvm8KD7-2FGdzumwe06zIWcz2UvWDQ99AJcAYuoo-2B1RnVdM7oJS9Y0ustEN2-2BOl10S9XjBU83VwLVYz-2Bz8GhE-2FCoBK8pKAUYApa-2BaVpLhBLfR14dZ6Ny8oyG6acgWU780wXmqfjgZu7sPfR8LorTBv1rYJ0wlgKG9tOZiRMpgb3BagbLCDBnlOBJCiXkCJgtSRYwaIQ-3D-3D), currently in its second year.  This competitive grant program directly supports the USFS’s [10-year strategy](https://u19539728.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=-2B73de0dREQUDGWQfTM3mhi8zaIYsCM5ySTcgcPWav6Sip7P-2B-2FK-2BpaIvWPG837jzYnRqY0z-2BG9eBIqdnfPmdz-2FfWe-2FCNJoJ5-2BRIU-2Fa3rExQOu3rn4nSyZ30-2BSvf9r-2FHaYsnE9lQdk681OJ3SZLkzE-2FREUiVRU9siEIqthz-2FZ3Uub-2FU29K9fBk819BLo3VOrRLvLgPfwAgOKNGwtLa8j59mA19V4TSuH-2FANGJDXQUX9TmQciiMquAHbVNXPrRMFDJfHbLPDph3pRxsu338kMYucwKk19064AT-2BOmK4UHw9Zy5iF0mONB-2FaA9d5UAsmNv8pf1k-2FY7TnsiRVf-2BPlpx-2FaV7tHGNtL1TwtLdYqSMocKAQb0JDH6vUniDIJNoI95y8V3Zt51Nx-2F-2FHIL-2BnpNYe1t3n9xbgWO7SrNTuODBpBoAQ0viufzxmhIpEYsuMm0uIOCTAUtlo-2Foi0U5VmWmoMYYZyaFgGYCE-2BDRvTERs03WxJ6XtKIhHoqdCZr5uf8WHtYnjQ83h07JCSgUXpiUREy-2FR5x2DNXvXqbOVad2-2Bwyj41-2BbbdZ5BIHmVEooka5jio2XX8X6_DfShkWCAhoLGP-2FJNrdlPJdV-2FLULhdq7A2Mns4NO8kAbKoy2hBWCjup-2FdSJ4mtav3QZgwkC4yOhBCK4lj-2B12aQmSu-2FUlRK9TGpVMbbW-2FFgW0wZhOs5ba3xvFzI6uJHj-2BwJ8G-2FkzG3EZmQ-2FxqoeBl-2F3NvED5j4NdzwJY3HbHgwMU3-2Bf7dWUfqctGEL4YM2-2Bge5pX-2B7zdsObaITv5BPabIQBgiNaviZeiI2FNJPFJMUOP585X-2BJCF32fczOgce50IeepoQmd-2Bd-2FTFlXsMle9Yoz6TimD21ia60zMvXCxLtxEmZ5mo4zPRWyEk-2BaLiEJeLel1H1yHQGKjjYw0a07fQgeu4tZf58gOz9gTHEOCdWT0aRW9LLtwlTgGtshGIJpK3925cbDNEckB0XyzHBhXE6MsrpNUKRBK97PsOgYgS3W0UmG-2BKAjgN8wbJ1-2BpWZjZC19khUBz51V59-2BUKI-2FP3-2Bvm8GtQB7yu28KNi1-2BFl1BrG-2BIKsYMUj0hJQF4x-2Bv-2FtXkDp2qqcuHm8-2BDr01nMwB97v-2BMiNBPnbo-2F18SbgI6-2FfEYtZwUNNJ6eQG6WWkOKjbJ6Z8t2OeHI-2FD37AFXyE-2Fi32fXEL3kFk4ytYlLsFF0a78KHztWF6EJNKItBFTExN1xOBphBBoymIjNjvKEPYkGnCkkA-3D-3D) 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.***Canadian Asset Firm Urges Forest Management as Antidote to Wildfires***While federal funding for wildfire programs hangs in the balance, there is growing consensus about common sense solutions to prevent them in the first place. In the wake of tragic wildfire outbreaks in Hawaii and Canada, a major forest asset manager based in Canada, EcoForests Asset Management, is [reminding](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/managed-forests-prevent-wildfires-301904779.html) policymakers that widespread “adoption of forestry management programs can prevent uncontrolled wildfires” and mitigate “the scope and scale of damages incurred during periods of drought.” Breaking forestry management down into terms that the general public can relate to, the asset manager states that “managed forests are cleared of thick undergrowth that dries and ignites quickly in periods of drought” resulting in a “less than 1% loss from fires.” According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. incurred $165 billion in damages from extreme weather in 2022.  More consistent adoption of forest management would take a big bite from those costs. **Congress Moves Wood Products Carbon Study**The wood products industry is currently advocating for a detailed study within the [Forest Products Laboratory](https://u19539728.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=-2B73de0dREQUDGWQfTM3mhvcOCPPCePKgD5IUhf4c1DvA35qWezVK6Tqj8LPiz8gHU_g1_DfShkWCAhoLGP-2FJNrdlPJdV-2FLULhdq7A2Mns4NO8kAbKoy2hBWCjup-2FdSJ4mtav3QZgwkC4yOhBCK4lj-2B12aQm1tCysqlliTnar61N-2FVIXTzUg4tSSmbBe0ElpGy-2FCQPtvfuguwsRWkMM9tfpS1ZlW-2BI-2B3yZIETbd-2BRBtRFA-2F16-2FF7ibJdCLSTkkuc5ZaK9PJvRAP7QhY8lnmp8DJ8WVLQYw3YKHRkZJai-2B2a1PfyocJu-2BzuAdY-2Bca-2BB0Xp5BFMXL5-2BH8vreGoiFD0lCP3HWCn1VM6-2FXrkkHpPdAtsYXs6lggp9ugSpfh-2BROn9clnQjHdTFbXsDy5sOvlhq5Jfl54LtGlnuf0mvDAALQMc2TfZcBqA3Bf7OHvhfTonQbqgYisqYRHBWMi2nlc50PWYu2EykgK49h2UdEWHGx37W1laPdc45oFlVyerYI2vjrbSy6-2F2d-2FE-2FKadTVsjOO3IAU-2BgDN3X54dGAMHsxI3yKfVu-2BgVkGM3mCfN3wAPuAt97wsCxsbNJmR-2F82W24u8FiJtUEQ7gAmak3ObgWFZvE4Bge8QGgmH-2FCwiW1o4agj9TA5L8) (FPL) that will accurately quantify the sector’s greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions and potential for wood products, thereby providing a tool to give industry credit for its environmental benefits. Before breaking for the August recess, members of the Senate Appropriation Committee included directions to USDA to move forward with a study to conduct a detailed evaluation on the amount of carbon stored annually in wood products within the FY 2024 spending bill.  Now that the sought-after program is included in the legislation, the coalition will advocate that the carbon study makes it across the finish line when lawmakers approve the final FY 2024 budget. Stay tuned for updates as the Federation and its allies work to push this project over the finish line in the fall. **Hardwoods, U.S. Chamber Fight for Permitting Reform, Extension of Comment Period**On August 7, the Hardwood Federation participated in a coalition meeting led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to discuss activities related to federal permitting reform, focusing on efforts to streamline the process across multiple agencies including EPA and the Department of Transportation, among others.  The Chamber raised alarm bells related to the Administration’s [proposal](https://u19539728.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=-2B73de0dREQUDGWQfTM3mhlwxIw-2F3xbmu8M3KCTl1T9-2FlBsQyt6zekLszEzAIxFRJMXFtsau-2FRputI7mcLMDRBf-2BWRrp-2BjUpZJOQUUsM9t-2FZbcZlXfMpiMphjZsAy2XCznOEMzoxxiesVMpRe1YvMTg-3D-3DyHqZ_DfShkWCAhoLGP-2FJNrdlPJdV-2FLULhdq7A2Mns4NO8kAbKoy2hBWCjup-2FdSJ4mtav3QZgwkC4yOhBCK4lj-2B12aQm1tCysqlliTnar61N-2FVIXTzUg4tSSmbBe0ElpGy-2FCQPtvfuguwsRWkMM9tfpS1ZlW-2BI-2B3yZIETbd-2BRBtRFA-2F16-2FF7ibJdCLSTkkuc5ZaK9PJvRAP7QhY8lnmp8DJ8WVLQYw3YKHRkZJai-2B2a1PfyocJu-2BzuAdY-2Bca-2BB0Xp5BFMXL5-2BH8vreGoiFD0lCP3HWCn1VM6-2FXrkkHpPdAtsYXs6lggp9ugSpfh-2BROn9clnQjHdTFbXsDy5sOvlhq5Jfl54LtGlnuf0mvDAALQMc2TfZcBqA3Bf7OHvhfTonQbqgYisJjHQ6ygamqCIdwoQxVuIMd1X6eSrxt4QmdErIa27UvBS-2F239BMZn6468b3uxoeeDxPldmtZCHZTPNM68fxcoe7-2B9bB1Tibb5VmnF9ttOPq-2BV8OqZsLhWNO8kzYQbzvEWZz3E2Q8ZXXhftw2bgq6JGtTcUL96-2FT5Z6RVl8LXyoimYraXIVwiS4T5VLvX-2BLI-2B) to alter National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) federal permitting requirements that would add red tape to a process that already takes up to four and a half years to complete. The hardwood sector is joining the Chamber in comments pushing back on the proposal, which may lay the groundwork for a court fight or new legislation. Although comments are currently due on September 29, the Federation joined the Chamber in a request to extend the comment period by an additional 45 days. **PLACEHOLDER Issue(s)**Content TBD.  |