

April 24, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Congratulations on your confirmation to be the United States Secretary of Agriculture. As leaders of the U.S. hardwood industry, we wish to extend our support to you as you take on the demanding task of leading the American agricultural sector.

The wood products industry in the U.S. is an important contributor to the U.S. economy, accounting for approximately 4 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP; wood products companies are among the top ten manufacturing sector employers in 47 states, producing \$210 billion in products annually. The industry employs nearly 900,000 people; more than the automotive, chemicals and plastics industries. And most of them are in rural areas where employment opportunities are limited.

The Hardwood Federation advocates for policy and legislation that protects and supports the hardwood industry's ability to grow their businesses and provide good-paying jobs to the local, state and federal economy. Our priorities include:

- Reform of the Federal Forest Management system, including efforts to allocate adequate funds to fight forest fires without raiding other essential Forest Service programs, increase timber harvests, improve wildlife habitat, and increase disease and pest infestation prevention.
- Reasonable reform to environmental protection programs, including NEPA and ESA which include measures to streamline the permitting process for forest management programs, including timber harvest programs, in ways that ensure certainty and reliable time frames for decision making.
- U.S. trade policy that support fair, legal and free trade of our products and is negotiated in a manner that addresses the multilayered concerns of the U.S. hardwood industry. Maintaining and expanding current export markets is vitally important to the industry, as is working to ensure that imports to the U.S. do not compete unfairly with U.S. domestic products.
- Tax policy that imposes fair rates on small and medium sized businesses, provides flexibility in reports and accounting methods, encourages private landowners to maintain family owned forests as forests, and minimizes the tax burden on families that wish to pass family owned businesses on to the next generation.

- Full funding of the US Department of Agriculture’s Market Access (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) programs which provide vital export services to U.S. hardwood suppliers and manufacturers. The Hardwood Federation supports passage of a 2018 Farm Bill that fully funds these vital programs.
- Federal policy that recognizes the carbon neutrality of forest-based biomass fuels that the hardwood sector uses to heat and power our facilities. Atmospheric carbon is stored for generations in the long lived products that we make. Likewise, the forests that we source our raw material from are sustainable and continually regenerate, guaranteeing that carbon will continue to be siphoned from the air we breathe.
- Passage of a 2018 Farm Bill that includes an energy title that recognize the benefits of forest based biomass, including the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, the Rural Energy for America Program and the Community Wood Energy Program.
- Prevention of the importation of illegally harvested timber that competes unfairly with sustainable and legally harvested U.S. supplies.
- Working with U.S. Government Agencies and Departments to implements programs that include wood as an approved green building material.

The Hardwood Federation Boards of Directors stand ready to work with you and the Trump Administration to develop policies that will grow our companies, provide jobs to the rural economy, and contribute to the economic strength of our country.

Sincerely,

Hardwood Federation Chair

Scott Heidler, President
Heidler Hardwood Lumber Co.
Chicago, IL

Hardwood Federation Past Chair

Darwin Murray, President
McClain Forest Products
West Plains, MO

Hardwood Federation Policy Chair

Jamison French, President & CEO
Northland Forest Products
Kingston, NH

Hardwood Federation Development Chair

Ted Rossi, Chief Executive Officer
The Rossi Group
Middletown, CT

Hardwood Federation PAC Chair

Tommy Maxwell, President & CEO
Maxwell Hardwood Flooring
Monticello, AR

Hardwood Federation Board & PAC Board

Lowery Anderson, Owner
Roy Anderson Lumber
Tompkinsville, KY

Skipper Beal, Owner
Beal Lumber Co.
Little Mountain, SC

Troy Brown, President
Kretz Lumber Company
Antigo, WI

Dan Corullo, Owner
Action Floor Systems
Mercer, WI

Rick Degen, Sales Manager
Bennett Hardwoods, Inc.
Wausau, WI

Don Finkell, CEO and Founder
American OEM Wood Floors
Rocky Face, GA

Rick Holden, Chief Operating Officer
Derr Flooring Co.
Willow Grove, PA

Pem Jenkins, President
Turn Bull Lumber Company
Elizabethtown, NC

Tom Johel, President & CEO
U-C Coatings
Buffalo, NY

Pat Lynch, Plywood Business Director
Roseburg Forest Products Co.
Springfield, OR

Jeff Meyer, President
Baillie Lumber Company
Hamburg, NY

Charlie Netterville, President
Fred Netterville Lumber Company
Woodville, MS

Jim Sitts, Appalachian Timber Manager
Columbia Forest Products
Old Fort, NC

John Smith, President & CEO
PA & IN Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Co.
Philadelphia, PA

Matthew Smith, Managing Partner & COO
Smith Creek
Borden, IN

Mark Vollinger, Vice-President of Sales
WM Cramer Lumber Company
Hickory, NC

Richard Wilkerson, President
Anderson-Tully Company
Vicksburg, MS

Jeff Wirkkala, President
Hardwood Industries, Inc.
Sherwood, OR