***Quick Updates*** ***from*** ***Your HF Team***

***August Recess Memo*** – As Congress enters the last couple of weeks of the August recess, with the Senate out until September 5 and the House until September 12, be on the lookout for your federal lawmakers as they make the rounds in the states.  As a reminder, in the event you see your elected officials, be sure to echo the Federation’s key “asks”:

* ***Hardwood Access and Education Program (HAP)*** – Establishing a hardwood education program, in the farm bill for example, kills two birds with one stone.  It will help grow jobs in rural communities in my state and improve the environment.
* ***HAP*** - This program 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.  For details, click [here](https://hardwoodfederation.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Hardwood%20Access%20Program%20Overview.pdf).
* ***USDA Export Promotion*** - Downsizing USDA’s [export promotion programs](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhardwoodfederation.wildapricot.org%2Fresources%2FDocuments%2FFarm%2520Bill-2023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) would impede our ability to export sustainably harvested hardwood products 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. For details, click** [here](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhardwoodfederation.wildapricot.org%2Fresources%2FDocuments%2FTax-%25202023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)**.**
* ***Transportation* – Congress must pass a “supply chain package” that creates flexibility for truck weights, grows the dwindling pool of trucker drivers and expedites implementation of ocean shipping reforms.  For details, click** [here](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhardwoodfederation.wildapricot.org%2Fresources%2FDocuments%2FTransportation%2520-%25202023%2520-%2520DLC.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)**.**

***Hardwood Congressional Ally Sounds Alarm Over Firefighter Pay***

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.  This could trigger a significant walk-out from workers tasked with combatting wildfires during the height of the season.  Rep. Simpson (R-ID) chairs the House committee that funds the Department of Interior and related agencies and warned representatives of the wood products industry earlier this year that budgetary pressures could result in deep cuts for essential programs, stating that Congress should use a “scalpel and not a cleaver” when looking for budget savings.  The Federation will keep you posted on budgetary developments impacting the sector as they unfold.

***Canadian Asset Firm Urges Forest Management as Antidote to Wildfires***

In the wake of major 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 firm 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.