

## Improvements to the State's Recreational Use of Land and Water Act (RULWA)

PFPA supports changes to the state's Recreational Use of Land and Water Act (RULWA) that expand protections for landowners and ensures that legal fees are covered for property owners who are found not liable for injuries to recreational users.

**Status:** HB544 was approved by the state House last week. The House bill is sponsored by Rep. Dan Moul (R-Adams). A Senate version of the bill, SB 72, is sponsored by Sen. Alloway (R-Franklin) and is in the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

### **Talking Points:**

- 🌲 The bills address modern conditions that have evolved since the legislation's initial enactment in 1960's, including the greatly expanded ownership of off-road motorized vehicles, the growth of recreation-related associations and a more litigious society.
- 🌲 We believe that the bills would result in more private acreage becoming open to public recreation opportunities, benefiting both enthusiasts and landowners.
- 🌲 We also believe the bills will reduce the incidence of trespassing by recreational participants, such as off-road motorized enthusiasts.

## Pennsylvania Hardwoods: Leading the Nation

- #1 in hardwood growing stock
- #1 in production of hardwood lumber
- #1 in hardwood lumber & wood product exports

## Pennsylvania's Forest Products Industry

### Employment:

About 60,000 Pennsylvanians  
Over 10% of the PA's mfg. workforce

### Businesses:

Over 2,100 Establishments

### Output (sales):

\$11.5 billion annually

### Total Economic Impact:

\$19 billion annually

## Pennsylvania's Sustainable Forest Resource

Nearly 17 million acres – almost 60% of PA's land area

More forests in PA now than 100 years ago

Forests in PA are growing at more than twice the rate that they are being harvested

Trees are a renewable resource that is naturally beautiful, carbon neutral and easily recyclable - hardwood trees in Pennsylvania regenerate naturally, meaning that replanting is usually not necessary

## Pennsylvania Forest Products Association

### 2016 Legislative Event

Tuesday, April 12, 2016  
Harrisburg Hilton & Towers  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania



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## Funding for Hardwood Initiatives

PFPA supports funding for the Department of Agriculture's *Hardwood Research & Promotion* line item in the 2016-17 State Budget at \$350,000.

**Status:** This line was eliminated in Governor Wolf's 2016-17 state Budget proposal. In the 2015-16 State Budget, which Governor Wolf allowed to pass into law without his signature, this line was funded \$350,000.

### Talking Points:

- 🌿 Promotion, research and technical assistance is essential to help with the continued recovery of the state's forest products industry and the 20,000 jobs lost during the last recession.
- 🌿 Continued support for the hardwood research and promotion line item will:
  - Allow for continued promotion of Pennsylvania forest products as a 'green' building material;
  - Continue to develop and expand international and domestic hardwood markets through targeted promotional strategies;
  - Develop and support strategies to better address wood industry training & workforce development needs;
  - Continue support for the education and promotion efforts of regional hardwood utilization groups.

## Sales Tax Exclusion for Logging Equipment

PFPA supports addressing the inequity in the state tax code by expanding the current sales tax exemption for agricultural equipment and material to also cover equipment and material used in commercial timbering operations.

**Status:** HB 504 was introduced by Rep. Gabler (R-Elk). SB 657 was introduced by Sen. Hutchinson (R-Venango). Both bills are currently in the Senate Finance Committee.

### Talking Points:

- 🌿 Both farms and manufacturers have sales tax exclusions for purchases of equipment, material and services, but logging operations do not. Loggers currently pay sales tax on purchases of equipment that is similar or even identical to the tax-exempt equipment used at farms and sawmills.
- 🌿 This would eliminate confusion among loggers, farmers, and sawmills on what purchases are excluded from sales tax.
- 🌿 Exclusion is limited to businesses producing/harvesting trees for the commercial production of forest products or wood energy.
- 🌿 Many other leading forest product producing states have similar sales tax exclusion – including NY, WV & VA.
- 🌿 This will have a minimal impact on the Commonwealth's tax revenues while providing a meaningful benefit to timbering operators, encouraging equipment modernization.

## Amendment to Clean and Green Program

PFPA supports HB 806, which would ensure that Clean and Green rates in counties are prohibited from applying a use value that results in assessments being higher than fair market value.

**Status:** HB 806 awaits consideration in by the State Senate. HB 806 passed in the House last summer. The bill was introduced by Rep. Causer (R-McKean).

### Talking Points:

- 🌿 In counties where a county-wide reassessment has not been conducted for many years, the fair market values may be lower than the use values provided by the Department of Agriculture. In these counties, being enrolled in Clean and Green can result in higher property taxes.
- 🌿 The bill allows the county assessor to apply a use value for land enrolled in forest reserve that equals the average of all subcategories of forest reserve use values. A landowner can provide a statement defining predominate forest classification type on the enrolled land, requiring the county to value the land according to that that forest type.
- 🌿 This issue has been more common in areas that have a preponderance of high quality black cherry that has dropped in value in recent years. The forest reserve value comes from a multiple year average.