

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

PFPA supported changes to the state's Recreational Use of Land and Water Act (RULWA) that expanded 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 General Assembly last year. The House bill was sponsored by Rep. Dan Moul (R-Adams).

Talking Points:

- ✿ The new law addresses modern conditions that have evolved since the legislation's initial enactment in the 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 this law results in more private acreage becoming open to public recreation opportunities, benefiting both enthusiasts and landowners.
- ✿ We also believe the new law may 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 65,000 Pennsylvanians
Over 10% of the PA's mfg. workforce

Businesses:
Over 2,100 Establishments

Output (sales):
\$11.6 billion annually

Total Economic Impact:
\$19 billion annually

Pennsylvania's Sustainable Forest Resource

More than 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

2019 Legislative Event

Tuesday, April 9, 2019
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 2019-20 state Budget at \$424,000 or above.

Status: This line was eliminated in Governor Wolf's 2019-20 state Budget proposal. In the 2018-2019 state Budget, this line was funded at \$424,000.

Talking Points:

- ✿ Although the economy continues to improve, promotion, research and technical assistance remains 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 promotion of Pennsylvania forest products as a green building material;
- ✿ Expand safety and other training to encourage insurance companies to lower worker's compensation rates for forest industry workers, or find workable models that could be used in Pennsylvania;
- ✿ Continue to develop and expand international and domestic hardwood markets through targeted promotional strategies;
- ✿ Continue support for the Hardwood Utilization Groups as part of the HDC funding (80% of funding of HDC funding).

Address Workers Comp Issues

Expand safety and other training to encourage insurance companies to lower worker's compensation rates for forest industry workers, or find other workable models that could be used in PA.

Status:

- ✿ PFPA is seeking to conduct a comprehensive review with state agencies to explore implementation of a private-public partnership to address the industry's concerns with the high workers compensation rates Pennsylvania loggers continue to pay.

Talking Points:

- ✿ High Workers Compensation rates discourage forest industry workers from purchasing necessary and adequate coverage.

Avoid Additional Taxation on Timber or Natural Gas

PFPA opposes the Governor's proposal for a new \$250 million tax on natural gas extraction.

Status: Governor Wolf included this tax as part of a new initiative for 2019.

Talking Points:

- ✿ An extraction tax on gas opens the possibility of a tax on timber as well.

Increasing Pennsylvania's Qualified Workforce

PFPA supports additional initiatives by the General Assembly to increase the number of qualified workers throughout Pennsylvania.

Talking Points:

- ✿ PFPA members continue to relay to us that finding qualified workers remains a major challenge throughout many areas in the Commonwealth. Many PFPA members' businesses provide stable, family sustaining jobs throughout Pennsylvania. PFPA encourages the PA General Assembly to continue to work towards providing education and job training for future employees in the forest products industry.