

Highlights of 2009 PFPA Legislative and Regulatory Activities

- ✿ PFPA and its legislative allies were able to preserve Department of Agriculture's Hardwoods Development Council during this difficult state budget year. While a cut in funding resulted in the elimination of the HDC grant program, key staffing positions were saved and initiatives, such as overseas marketing and the Pennsylvania WoodMobile, will continue. PFPA also worked closely with the Department to ensure that HDC staff was paid during the long and uncertain budget impasse.
- ✿ PFPA supported recently enacted legislation that promotes wider use of prescribed burning as a sustainable forest and habitat management tool.
- ✿ PFPA's meetings with PDA Secretary Dennis Wolff and other Administration officials led to a series of business financing summits for logging and wood companies. PFPA held a similar meeting with USDA officials on the opportunities available through the new Biomass Crop Assistance Program.
- ✿ PFPA worked with local legislators to get PennDOT to implement relief for loggers and sawmills who are facing an explosion of state road posting in those portions of the state experiencing increased truck traffic as a result of natural gas development.
- ✿ We have obtained favorable changes to state economic development lending policy and numerous green building bills that will expand the number of qualifying green building programs recognized by the state. This will help to decreased chance of discriminatory practices against the use of wood in Pennsylvania commercial and residential construction.
- ✿ PFPA continues to work closely with state and federal agencies to educate our industry and mitigate the impacts of Emerald Ash Borer regulations on wood and pallet companies. This included a hosting a number of information meetings for industry and participating in an "Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week" press event.
- ✿ Recommendations by PFPA were incorporated into a recently introduced state housing and remodeling stimulus bill.
- ✿ PFPA has testified at hearings of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees in both the Senate and House and the House Commerce Committee. We have also hosted issue briefings for the House Timber Caucus.
- ✿ PFPA worked with the Jt. Conservation Committee to hold hearings and informational meetings on important forest topics, including riparian areas, green building mandates, development of the state's wood pellet industry and the impact of climate rules on forestry.
- ✿ PFPA continues to advocate for increased access to timber on state-owned lands, emphasizing the importance of these lands to support the eventual industry recovery and replace increasingly scarce private timber.
- ✿ PFPA is engaged in seeking amendments to proposed changes to Chapter 102 regulations that would require mandatory stream buffers in certain instances and place restrictions on forestry in these buffers.
- ✿ We continue to actively oppose the introduction and passage of legislation that would mandate the licensing and regulation of foresters and forestry operations in the state.
- ✿ PFPA opposes proposals that increase taxes and fees on forest product manufacturers.
- ✿ PFPA is opposing more excessive criminal penalties and civil damages for accidental, nonconsensual tree removals.
- ✿ PFPA has sought to protect industry interests by providing input to DCNR and Bureau of Forestry on various policy and guideline issues, such as carbon sequestration, timber contracting, biomass harvesting and green building materials.
- ✿ More than 80 legislators, legislative staff and key agency personnel attended PFPA's Legislative Event in April, 2009.
- ✿ Acting as industry spokesperson, PFPA fielded media inquiries, issued press releases and submitted letters to the editor on a variety of issues impacting our industry.