

July 2, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

On behalf of the Hardwood Federation, I would like to convey our support for your efforts to reform the Endangered Species Act. 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 raw materials necessary to support our industry are of course, taken from woodlands and forests, private, local, state and federal. The Endangered Species Act, in its current form, provides confusing direction, endless red-tape and unclear time frames for decision making which combine to put unnecessary burdens on the small and medium sized businesses that make up the majority of the community. Although we support protecting our natural resources, we advocate for doing so using science-based methodology that leads to positive outcomes under a defined timeline, a timeline that also allows forest based businesses to grow and thrive.

The reform measures you have proposed in your draft discussion document reflect a common sense approach to efficiently and effectively addressing the challenges faced by many species in today's changing world, but they also provide a well-defined path towards reaching realistic goals, providing certainty to both the business and environmental communities. We also applaud the emphasis on state and local leadership in the decision making process which puts problem-solving in the hands of those closest to the issues at hand.

We look forward to future conversations regarding this much needed action.

Sincerely,



Dana Lee Cole
Executive Director