

ESFPA news & updates

September 3, 2020 | Issue 13

ESFPA Regional Meetings Go Virtual!

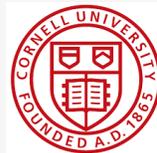
Please follow this [link](#) to view the meeting notice and register for each meeting!

U.S. Senate Democrats Release Climate Change Report

Senate Democrats released a 260-page [climate change report](#) that outlines their vision if they take control of the upper chamber in November. In a press release, Senate Democrats say the plan will reduce emissions rapidly to achieve 100 percent global net emissions no later than 2050, stimulate economic growth by increasing federal spending to at least two percent of the GDP (\$430 billion annually), and provide 10 million new jobs. We reported in July that the House Democrats put out a 538 page [Action Plan for Solving the Climate Crisis](#).

NYS Insurance Fund Offers PPE Credit

The New York State Insurance Fund announced the plan this week, which offers policyholders of workers compensation a five percent credit of their annual premium for the purchase of PPE supplies. The maximum reimbursement is \$500. For more information, click [here](#).



Assessment of Neonicotinoids in New York State

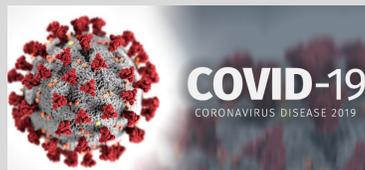
Cornell CALS has recently released a [report](#) assessing the use of neonicotinoids in agriculture, forestry and land management. Since neonicotinoid insecticides first became commercially available in the early 1990s, they have become the most widely used class of insecticides in the world. The focus of the study is limited to direct economic benefits to users and risk to pollinators and the following three goals: 1) Estimate the pest control and plant protection benefits of neonicotinoid insecticides under current usage in New York, 2) Estimate the risk from neonicotinoids to pollinators, and 3) Evaluate the relative benefits and risks of likely neonicotinoid substitutes (i.e., other insecticides or pest control strategies) compared to neonicotinoids.

While a long report, the Executive Summary can be found on pages 17–26. One interesting forest analysis relating to neonicotinoid use in forests – “For a few application contexts, restrictions on neonicotinoids could have negative environmental growers do benefit from the insurance value of neonicotinoid-treated seeds. Most importantly, New York relies on neonicotinoid-based products to contain and control hemlock woolly adelgid. There are currently no effective, affordable alternatives for slowing progress of this pest, which kills almost 100% of infested trees. Hemlocks are the third most common tree in New York, and are an ecologically important foundation species, so ending control of hemlock woolly adelgid with neonicotinoids could have severe consequences for New York forests.”



IRS Guidance on Tax Deferrals

The US Chamber have [composed a short](#)



Report Shows \$1.83 Billion Impact of CoVid-19 to Loggers

A recent analysis generated for the American Loggers Council (ALC) shows that this year's

[memo](#) summarizing IRS guidance released last week related to the president’s Executive Order on employee payroll tax deferral. There have been many questions about President Trump’s [Executive Order on Payroll Tax Deferral](#), issued on August 29th, 2020. That order used existing statutory authority to **defer, but not cancel**, the withholding of employee’s social security payroll tax for the period September 1 to December 31, 2020, It would provide **temporary** relief to employees that are “generally” paid up to \$4,000 biweekly, or \$104,000 per year. While the order instructed the Treasury Department to consider options for cancelling these deferred withholdings, no statute, rule or order has been issued doing so

Even with this IRS guidance, there are many unanswered questions regarding this program:

- If an employer opts into the program, do they have to apply the deferral to all eligible employees during all eligible pay periods?
- Are their restrictions as to when an employer can opt into, and once in, opt out of the deferral program?
- Can an employer that opts into the program allow individual employers to opt in or out of the deferral program?
- How are payroll taxes recouped if an employee no longer works for the same employer during the January to April 2021 period for recovery of deferred withholdings? Would employers be liable for any unrecovered tax liability?
- What will Congress do? They could include a payroll tax “holiday” in an upcoming COVID relief bill, either forgiving taxes deferred under the Executive Order, or substituting a different program. To date, Congressional agreement on a payroll tax holiday has seemed unlikely.

Employer’s need to think hard and clear about opting into the program as the uncertainties for both employers and employees are huge.

decrease in raw wood material consumption has led to a **\$1.83 billion reduction** in the value of logger/trucker–delivered wood. The report, conducted by the analytics firm Forests2Market, found that raw wood material consumption between January–July 2020 was 6.7% less than the same period in 2019 – dropping 21.4 million tons of material. This resulted in a 13% reduction (\$1.83 billion) in value of the delivered wood. The report and more information about the Logger COVID Relief efforts can be found at [Save Our Loggers](#). If you recall in late July ESFPA conducted a campaign and communicated to our Congressional Delegation on this relief package.

2021 Paid Family Leave Contribution Formula released

On September 1, Linda Laceywell, Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services (DFS) announced the [paid family leave benefit and employee contribution rate](#) effective for January 1, 2021. The Superintendent has determined that the premium rate (paid by the employee only, although front loaded by the employer) for Family Leave Benefits for coverage beginning January 1, 2021 shall be 0.506% (up from 0.270%), plus 0.005% for the Risk Adjustment for the COVID–19 claims paid under Chapter 25 of the Laws of 2020, for a total of 0.511% of an employee’s wages each pay period up to and not to exceed an annual maximum employee contribution of \$385.34 (up from \$196.72). For 2021, eligible employees will receive up to 67% (up from 60%) of their average weekly wage, up to a maximum of 67% of the statewide average weekly wage (\$1,450.17), for up to 12 weeks (up from 10 weeks) of leave .The PFL benefit is now fully implemented.

ESFPA Comments on “White Paper – Proposed Clean Energy Standard 2.0”

ESFPA submitted [comment on the White Paper](#) proceeding on Motion of the Commission to Implement a Large–Scale Renewable Program and a Clean Energy Standard, otherwise known as CES 2.0. The proposed standard is developed to implement the Climate Leadership & Community Renewal Act goal of 70% of the State’s major electric generation to be fueled by “renewable energy systems” by 2030. This definition of “renewable energy systems” excludes the use of biofuels, including biomass. ESFPA’s comments raise the idea of a new Tier 5 standard that would recognize biofuels, including biomass in achieving the standard of 100% “zero carbon” electric generation by 2050.

Tall Wood Building Codes – California Building Standards Commission Passes Code Changes

The California Building Standards Commission has passed code changes for Tall Wood Buildings and will adopt the entire series of ICC changes proposed. California will become the fifth state to okay early adoption of the International Building code and agreed that the benefits for the state include the potential for increased market demand, alignment with wildland fire prevention and forest management goals, and improved carbon storage. These changes will become effective in July 2021. While these types of tall building changes not have much impact yet on the forest products industry in a state with New York markets, these trends and forest products innovations are significant as the greater wood product industry looks for ways to enter Mass Timber and Tall Wood Building and a greater use of wood in building markets as substitution of more carbon intensive building materials.



under CLCPA

The Department of Environmental Conservation is proposing the addition of 6 NYCRR Part 496, "Statewide Greenhouse Gas Emission Limits." The proposed rule adopts limits on the emission of greenhouse gases in 2030 and 2050, as a percentage of 1990 emissions, per the requirements of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). It applies to all emission sources in the State, but the rule does not itself impose compliance obligations. [View the Proposed Rule](#)

The Department will hold two [public hearings](#) via webinar on October 20 at 2 p.m. and at 6 p.m. Any person wishing to provide a public statement must register in advance of the hearing no later than 10:00 a.m. Monday, October 19, 2020. [Register HERE to Make a Public Comment](#).

Hardwood Promotion Webinar and Video

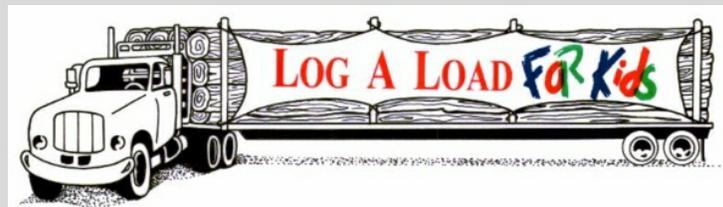
The Real American Hardwood Promotion Coalition (RAHPC) has conducted webinars recently presenting their research findings about what drives consumers to purchase, or not purchase, hardwood products. You can view the webinar and video [here](#). This is part of a developing campaign on expanding hardwood markets led by RAHPC. RAHPC is also developing a second webinar to recommend marketing strategies and activities which we share soon.

Western NY COVID Testing Swat Team

On Friday, August 28th, Governor Cuomo announced a COVID-19 Testing SWAT Team lead by NYS Department of Health to advance testing and contact tracing due to an increase in positive cases. See and [here](#) for more information.

Green Practices Can Negate Climate Emissions on NY Farms and Forests

Cornell CALS has published [new report](#) produced by researchers Peter Wightman and Jennifer Woodbury which outlines opportunities for members of the New York state agricultural and forestry industries to help improve air and water quality — while also increasing profits. Implementing these strategies could help meet the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act emission goals. Wightman and Woodbury have also authored a companion report, "[Sources and Sinks of Major Greenhouse Gases associated with New York State's Natural and Working Lands: Forests, Farms, and Wetlands](#)" (2020), commissioned by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.



Log A Load Update

Over the years your donations have helped create miracles for countless local children and their families, some of whom are part of our forest industry family. Due to the virus our major fundraising events such as the NYS Woodsmen's Field Days in Boonville have been cancelled but the children and their family's needs have not gone away. With \$11,092.00 raised so far we are just 1/3rd of the way to our goal. We're asking you to dig deep into your pockets and give to Log a Load and benefit the Children's Miracle Network Hospital of your choice. Please make your checks to the Empire State Forestry Foundation (ESFF) and mail them to: 47 Van Alstyne Dr. Rensselaer, NY 12144. Donations through the Empire State Forestry Foundation are 100 % tax deductible. We greatly appreciate your help in making even more miracles possible this year.

Chief Forester – Cotton Hanlon

Employer: Cotton-Hanlon, Inc.

Job Type: Full Time

Location: Cayuta, NY

Job Description: Cotton-Hanlon, Inc. (C-H) is seeking a chief forester to lead its forestland management activities. C-H owns and manages over 33,000 acres in New York and Pennsylvania for the full array of forest products and services, including timber, recreational leases and energy leases. The chief forester will be an integral member of C-H's management team, involved in strategic planning, budgeting, and development of new business initiatives.

Qualifications:

- Significant forest management experience, including field forestry and contract supervision.
- 10-15 years of experience in the industry preferred
- BS in forestry preferred

Compensation: To be negotiated based on experience

How to apply: Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Michael Hanlon, President, Cotton-Hanlon, Inc., Box 65, Cayuta, NY 14824

Closing date: October 5, 2020

After 25 years Bob O'Brien has decided to take an early retirement, but he'll be working with everyone at C-H to ensure a smooth transition all through out the process from the interviewing to the final on boarding training/orientation. Questions about the position can be directed to Mike Hanlon or Bob O'Brien at mike@cottonhanlon.com , bob@cottonhanlon.com or 607-594-4600.

[More Job Description Information](#)

Executive Director – NYFOA

NYFOA Looking to Hire and Executive Director

The New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is looking to hire an Executive Director. [Here](#) is a link to the announcement.