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ESFPA *"The People Behind New York's Healthy Forests and Quality Wood Products"*
the **Empire** **ENVOY**

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UNITED WE SUCCEED

By John K. Bartow, Jr.

2025 came in like a lion and continues to roar as we go to print. Governor Kathy Hochul has framed her budget and legislative agenda in her State of the State Message delivered on January 14th (see page 3) and her SFY 2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal package two weeks later. On May 7th the Legislature adopted the record SFY 2025-26 Budget.

The Governor has bet her future on an "affordability agenda", but in her proposals she falls significantly short. Her Executive Budget came in at \$252 billion. The Legislature added another \$2 billion. That is a \$100 billion increase over 10 years. And despite knowing that New York will be facing significant federal funding shortfalls in the coming months, the State is choosing record expenditures.

2025 is also the start of a two-year legislative cycle. We are already monitoring over 150 bills that could impact us. Many are re-introductions from last year, but some are new. See our priority legislation article on page 5.

On the federal front we have completed President Donald Trump's "first 100 days". As with any new administration, the President gets some significant grace while advancing his agenda. President Trump has hit the ground running. It's been difficult to keep up with the President's agenda as he implements over 100 Executive Orders, sets forth ambitious trade and tariff limits, and starts a promised federal deregulation agenda. See our FEDERAL CORNER on page 8 to get some of the latest highlights.

With an ambitious agenda there also comes major unintended consequences. Economic pain causes political pain, and the President has felt enough pressure to change course on tariffs. Uncertainty remains, but it's now clear

the President has a threshold everyone will watch closely moving forward. Executive branch departments and agencies are in turmoil as buyouts continue, forthcoming cuts loom, and reorganization plans emerge. Tens of thousands of federal employees, especially those with the longest tenure, are opting for buyouts rather than risk losing access to federal benefits if they are terminated. At the same time, departments are chronically understaffed with political appointees whose workloads and inboxes continue to grow.

The 119th Congress has also been active in the past few months. House and Senate Republicans, now more than ever, are under pressure to deliver economic benefits to taxpayers and the economy through reconciliation without inciting political backlash over cuts to popular government and social welfare programs. The clock is ticking. As we go to print, Congress begins the 2026 budget process and President Trump has delivered his budget priorities recommending \$186 billion in cuts to discretionary spending.

If anything, we live in evolving and uncertain times. To that end we want to thank all our members who have committed to us in our 2025 Membership Drive. We have met our budget target and are very encouraged by the support you have shown us.

Be safe out there and don't hesitate to reach out with your questions and concerns, either to the ESFPA staff or members of your Board. Working together we can make a difference.

John Bartow

The Empire Envoy

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Founded in 1906, ESFPA is dedicated to improving the economic climate for the forest products industry and to promote management of New York's Forests to meet the resource needs of today and for future generations. ESFPA counts among its 400 members furniture companies, lumber manufacturers, forest landowners, timber harvesters, pulp and paper companies, and other wood products manufacturers from across New York State. Members own and manage 1.5 million acres of New York's forests and employ over one-third of the 60,000 individuals who work in the forests and wood-using mills around the state. **The Empire Envoy** is the newsletter of the Empire State Forest Products Association. Copyright© by ESFPA. Articles may be reproduced with permission of the publisher. **The Empire Envoy** is produced monthly for ESFPA members and interested parties. For information on subscriptions or membership, please contact ESFPA.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Jennifer DeFrancesco, ESFPA Chairperson of the Board



I have started and stopped writing this letter dozens of times. The first quarter of 2025 has been a whirlwind for most of us and I have no great words of wisdom to put it all into perspective. Nothing seems adequate. So, I thought I would draw inspiration from what I care about the most, my family.

In these times of uncertainty, we must dig deeper than we ever thought possible. Remember what brought you to this business and what keeps you getting up every morning, still proud to be a part of the forest products industry. For me, it is the promise of the next generation, 6 kids ranging from 1-14 years old, all immersed in our family business. When you walk in our office or call on the phone you can always hear the noise of kids playing and 90% of the time they are playing "logging job".

My 3-year-old nephew can tell you about logging equipment and how to run a logging site better than most adults that I know. Right down to muttering under his breath as he fills out his "bills" at his little desk - he has it all figured out.

They inspire me, even on the worst days. We must keep this going for them.

That is why, as an industry, we need to demand respect for what we do and some predictability and stability. None of us are afraid of hard work and a little risk - we wouldn't be here if we were, but we need to have some level of certainty and support if we are going to continue to thrive. We need to make our voices heard, and there is no easier way to do that than continuing to be a part of ESFPA and other trade associations. Your

(See "Message" continued on page 3)

ESFPA Sustaining Members



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON *(continued from page 2)*

participation in our write-in campaigns will take less than 5 minutes of your time, but they make an impact.

If you are interested in taking it even further, and I encourage you to do so, we can help you with the process. Our staff is available to help you set up calls or meetings with your representatives or give you advice on how to do so. We also host several events throughout the year

with representatives from government and state agencies present. Please show up to those events!

No one can tell our needs better than us and we are past the point of sitting idle and hoping someone else will speak up for us. We need to be shouting from the rooftops, and demanding that they listen.

STATE CORNER

2025 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS - KEY TAKE-AWAYS



On January 14th Governor Kathy Hochul delivered her 2025 State of the State Address. After 45 minutes of what seemed like a musical cabaret, she kicked off her remarks, doubling down on affordability and safety, boldly stating “your family is my fight”. She then went on an hour litany of tax cuts, tax credits and expenditures for childcare, education, public safety, housing, mental health, health and social services.

On the economic development front she did spend time on support for small businesses and bringing technology and AI to businesses. Empire State Development Corporation (ESD) will partner with New York’s network of Entrepreneurship Assistance Centers (EACs) to provide AI training to entrepreneurs and small businesses across the State. We will have to see how this unfolds in her budget. There was a lot on AI and Semiconductors, all of which demand a lot of energy, but very little on how to meet those energy demands in the near future and in a cost-effective manner.

She talked a lot about addressing New York’s critical housing needs. This is the third year in a row she has highlighted New York’s housing crisis but that has not really translated into a lot of new housing startup, at least in upstate New York. While New York can spur some affordable housing needs this is really a national housing market problem and one which need both federal and private sector solutions. We may see some

benefit in housing retrofit based on home energy solutions, but funding for these has been slow to date.

Governor Hochul made reference to a “climate ambition green light” directing the state to embark on the single-largest program of climate investment in the history of the State budget, directing over \$1 billion in new spending towards achieving a more sustainable future. Governor Hochul’s investment will span different sectors of our economy and across the state’s geography. By retrofitting homes and incentivizing the installation of heat pumps, New York can help cut energy bills. Governor Hochul will also deeply invest in ensuring our public infrastructure can serve as hubs of sustainability, including building out thermal energy networks at SUNY campuses.

Over the coming months, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will take steps forward on developing the cap-and-invest program, proposing new reporting regulations to gather information on emissions sources, while creating more space and time for public transparency and a robust investment planning process. We had fully anticipated cap-and-invest to come out earlier in 2025, but now we are hearing that we may not see cap-and-invest until after the 2026 election. Governor Hochul did mention in the State of the State that DEC would be developing new reporting regulations to gather information on emissions sources. The Climate Scoping Plan from 2022 did call for a much broader emission reporting program so we can expect to see much lower thresholds for emissions reporting to be rolled out in the coming months.

To meet this growing demand for dispatchable clean energy generation, The Governor is proposing New York to develop a Master Plan for Responsible Advanced Nuclear Development that will guide any nuclear projects. As part of that process, New York will help lead a multi-state Consortium on Nuclear Energy focused on driving down costs and risk-sharing.

Adverse weather events can severely disrupt small businesses, causing damage to inventory, reduced consumer demand, and employee layoffs. Governor Hochul proposes modernizing the

(See “State of the State” continued on page 4)

2025 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS - KEY TAKE-AWAYS *(continued from page 3)*

Jobs Retention Tax Credit Program to better support businesses in disaster-affected areas. The updated program will lower the eligibility threshold to include businesses with ten or more employees, allowing small businesses to participate for the first time. The Governor's expansion also removes industry-specific limitations, allowing all affected businesses to seek support after an emergency event.

Not a lot of excitement or detail in this year's State of the State. The Governor has promised a lot of tax cuts and credits, some significant new expenditures, and committed state agencies to undertake a lot with no new resources. There is no guarantee the Legislature will agree to this and already the Legislature is laying out different priorities. None of which costs less or reduce taxes.

SFY 2025-26 STATE BUDGET

On January 21st the Governor released the Executive Budget, which held more detail on her "affordability agenda" but also proposed record spending. The NYS Legislature approved the 2025-2026 State Budget on May 7, 2025, after a delay of over a month beyond the traditional April 1 deadline. The budget totals around \$254.3 billion, a significant increase of over \$10 billion compared to the previous year and over \$100 billion more than a decade ago.

This year's budget avoids increasing personal income taxes and in large measure corporate income taxes. The budget does raise taxes on large New York City businesses to raise funds for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Most residents will get a one-time inflation rebate check from \$150-\$400.

The budget does provide the Governor with limited ability to adjust outlays in the budget up to \$2 billion in the event that the federal budget impacts revenues to New York State. It is highly likely that New York will see revenue losses in the Federal Budget and the Legislative leaders have indicated they will return in the fall. Likely sometime between election day and Thanksgiving.

Here is a breakdown of the big items as they affect our sector:

TED Bill

Part M – Overweight Vehicle Enforcement Using Weigh-In-Motion Technology

This bill expands statutory authorization for the use of weigh-in-motion (WIM) technology to help keep overweight vehicles off bridges and highways and improve traffic flow. WIM technology refers to a system where sensors embedded in the road surface measure the weight of vehicles while they are moving, allowing authorities to identify and target overweight trucks for inspection and potential fines without requiring them to stop at a traditional weigh station. **Looks like this could be largely limited to downstate but we need to confirm.**

Part QQ – Extend the Youth Hunting Program

The bill extends the provisions of Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) §11-0935 allowing 12-year-old and 13-year-old hunters to pursue white-tailed deer with a firearm or crossbow when supervised by an experienced adult hunter until December 31, 2028.

Part RR – Hazardous Waste Superfund Reauthorization

This bill improves and reauthorizes the Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Site Program, known as the State Superfund Program, to provide the program with measures to accelerate

the remediation of sites and enable development for manufacturing, clean energy, housing, and other needs. The bill would also increase the amount of bonds that may be issued for purposes of financing the program.

Part TT – Title Insurance (Not Adopted)

Governor & Senate: This bill would have authorized the Attorney General to accept Title Company Insurance in the event that the Attorney General finds title objections that make the title unmarketable. This would have authorized the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation to request the use of title insurance on fee and easement acquisitions. Ultimately the Assembly and the State Attorney General could not accept this provision.

Part EEE – NY HEAT Act (Not Adopted)

Senate: Would update gas supply infrastructure to comply with CLCPA. Puts a limit of 6% of household income threshold in place for energy burden cost.

Part FFF – Climate Resilient New York Act of 2025 (Not Adopted)

Senate: Establishes the Office of Climate Resilience. \$1 million appropriation.

Capital Projects Appropriations

Here is what was included in the Capital Projects bill:

Environmental Protection Fund

The adopted budget increases funding to **\$425 million** for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) including funding for:

- Wood Products Development Council – \$20,000 (Down from \$200,000 in 2025 due to a \$600,000 surplus from previous years)
- Regenerate NY cost share program – \$500,000
- Hemlock Wholly Adelgid – \$500,000
- Climate & Applied Forestry Research Initiative (CAFRI) – \$1.5 million
- Community Forests – \$500,000
- Easements for Land Trusts – \$1.5 million

(See "State Budget" continued on page 5)

STATE BUDGET *(continued from page 4)*

Sustainable Future Program

New **\$1 billion** to fund climate mitigation and adaptation projects including but not limited to: reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution; decarbonizing and retrofitting buildings.

EDUCATION LABOR AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE

Probably the best business news in this Budget.

Provides **\$6.2 billion** outstanding Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trust Fund debt. This alleviates trust fund insolvency measures for businesses for taxable year 2025. Addresses UI losses due to COVID. Businesses should soon see the elimination of the “surcharge” to settle this debt on the employer portion of UI contributions.

ESFPA 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY TRACKING

On January 8th the 206th Session of the New York State Legislature convened for the biennial period of 2025-2026. To date over 5,000 bills have been introduced, many carried over from the 2023-2024 Session.

There are over 15,000 bills introduced in the Senate and Assembly so far this year. ESFPA is following over 250 bills as follows:

- 8 Bills we have filed Memorandum of Support
- 12 Bills we have filed Memorandum of Objection
- 110 bills we have No Position At This Time (NPAT)
- 95 Bills we are Monitoring.

The 2025 Session is scheduled to end on June 12th, but Speaker Heastie has asked for 3 additional days to be added to the Legislative Session Calendar since the Budget was 5 weeks delayed. We also know that the Legislature will likely return in the fall to address federal funding impacts to New York’s budget. It is possible that the Legislature will take up bills in a fall session as well.

The following summarizes key bills ESFPA is tracking:

Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (EPR) – NPAT A. 1749 (Glick)/S. 1464 (Harckham)

Enacts the “Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act” to require companies selling, offering for sale, or distributing covered packaging materials and products to reduce consumer packaging, improve recycling and recycling infrastructure, including supporting reusable and refill infrastructure, financially support municipal recycling programs, reduce toxins in packaging and require producers of products to bear the onus for end-of-life solutions to product packaging.

ESFPA remains pleased that non-packaging paper is not included in the bill, and it remains a packaging proposal. The Bill passed the Senate last year and we expect it to pass again in 2025. There is pressure from municipalities and environmental groups to amend the bills to include all paper products. If that happens the bill includes provisions related to rates and dates, post-consumer content, mandatory product reductions and toxics that we could not support. ESFPA has not issued a memo on this bill in 2025, but we have signed onto a memo of concerns led by the Business Council of NY.



Waste Affordability Act – NPAT A. 6191 (Jackson)/S. 5062 (Martinez)

Enacts the Affordable Waste Reduction Act; defines terms; provides for registration of producer responsibility organizations and service providers; establishes the Producer Responsibility Advisory Board; provides for Department of Environmental Conservation responsibilities; provides for Producer Responsibility Advisory Board, organization, producer and service provider responsibilities; creates a recyclable or compostable covered materials lists and exempt materials list; establishes producer fees; provides for service provider reimbursement.

Introduced as an alternative bill to the Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act in hopes to draw the moderate majority members away from the bill that business groups do not like. The bill does include all paper products but also has paper exclusions that would remove many of our virgin fiber products from the bill. ESFPA has not commented on this bill yet.

(See “Legislative Priority Tracking” continued on page 6)

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY TRACKING *(continued from page 5)*

Pesticides in Wetlands OPPOSE – A. 6930 (Burdick)/S. 5983-A (Harckham)

This bill would authorize local governments that have adopted freshwater wetland protection laws to prohibit the use of pesticides in wetlands.

ESFPA opposes this legislation as ECL Article 33 governing the application and use of pesticides clearly preempts local regulation of pesticides. Despite several amendments the Governor has vetoed this legislation three times.

Clean Fuel Standard – NPAT A. 964-B (Woerner)/S. 1245 (Parker)

This legislation would establish a Clean Fuel Standard (CFS) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector. ESFPA has supported this for the heavy-duty transportation and aviation sector consisting of vehicles that presently do not have electrification alternatives. These heavy-duty sources account for as much as one-third of New York's transportation emissions. ESFPA has backed this legislation on how a CFS can achieve emission reductions while supporting our agricultural and forest-based economy, localizing sources of fuel within New York, and helping to use our agricultural and forest landscape as a solution to climate change.

The Clean Fuel Standard passed the Senate in 2024 in an amended version pushed by Senator Parker. These amendments are not as favorable for bio-based feed stocks. ESFPA is revisiting the bill and potential benefits to bio-based feedstocks.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel Tax Credit – SUPPORT – A. 7398-A (Barrett)/S. 4065-C (Parker)

Establishes a sustainable aviation fuel tax credit and eligibility criteria for such tax credit.

ESFPA supports this legislation as a means to incentivize new low-grade markets and recognize renewable, sustainable biofuels.

Cap & Invest – NPAT – A. 3975 (Kelles)/S. 4651-A (Parker)

Establishes an economy-wide cap and invest program to support greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the state by setting a maximum allowable amount of greenhouse gas emissions by covered entities and regulating the sale or auction of greenhouse gas emissions allowances to covered entities.

ESFPA has been participating in the DEC Cap & Invest rulemaking for 3 years. We do not believe that adopting legislation on Cap & Invest is the way to go at this time. We are working with the Business Council of NY and other industry-related groups to have this adopted as a rule. The Governor has put Cap & Invest off for now and directed DEC to pursue a broader Greenhouse Gas Emissions inventory before proposing regulations.

NY Home Energy Affordable Transition Act (HEAT Act) - OPPOSE – A. 4870-A (Simon)/S. 4158 (Krueger)

Amends the Public Service Law to include achievement of "climate justice and emission reduction mandates" of the CLCPA. Establishes a goal of capping residential customer gas, electric and steam costs at six percent of their household income. Includes multiple provisions on continuing natural gas service to residential customers but with a goal of eventual reduction of

natural gas. Excludes natural gas from "shall provide" provisions for new natural gas service to be provided "as authorized by" the Public Service Commission (PSC). PSC may order curtailment or discontinuance of natural gas use where "reasonably required" to implement state energy policy. Unclear as to how this will impact existing natural gas in industrial and manufacturing processes. PSC to review utility capital plans to consider feasible alternatives consistent with the CLCPA. New natural gas service into unserved areas generally prohibited after 12/31/24.

This legislation was passed by the Senate, 2024. The Governor did not include the HEAT act in her SFY 2026 Executive Budget. The Senate did try to add the HEAT Act to the budget, but it was eventually not included. ESFPA signed onto a broad coalition opposition memo as this was included in the budget.

Temperature Extreme Mitigation Program Act (TEMP Act) - NPAT – A. 3527 (Bronson)/S. 3412 (Ramos)

Provides for the regulation of indoor and outdoor worksites with temperature protection standards and education, training, and reporting requirements to ensure that employers provide safe conditions for their employees. Attributes extreme temperatures to climate change. This legislation includes temperature standards to be followed by employers within the scope to avoid undue harm to employees.

ESFPA had not opined on this legislation as it does not define manufacturing, loggers, or foresters in the scope of covered "industries." In 2024 we did agree to sign-on an industry letter opposing this legislation in that the legislation is not aligned with already required OSHA requirements and several absurdities included in the legislation. We do believe that our sector is not directly impacted, but simple changes could include us.

PFAS Monitoring and Disclosure – OPPOSE – A. 5832 (Kelles)/S. 4574 (May)

This legislation would require all existing and new water discharge permits to monitor for one year their discharges and to report any level of PFAS documented. This legislation was amended on May 31, 2023, to include general permits for multi-purpose stormwater permits.

S. 227-B Passed the Senate in 2023. ESFPA has filed a memorandum in opposition to this bill. S. 4574 passed the Senate on 4/22/25.

Climate Superfund Bill – NPAT – A. 1474 (Dinowitz)/S. 824 (Krueger)

This bill makes Chapter Amendments to the Climate Change Superfund Act (Chapter 679 of 2024) to revise the cost recovery administrative process, add additional detail on the adaptation program, increase project spending flexibility, and provide additional time for implementation. Overall, the law mandates "compensatory payments" from any business that extracted or refined fossil fuels whose products were determined by the State to be responsible for 1 billion tons or more of greenhouse gases during the period of 2000 to 2018. Includes entity specific assessments calculated on its share of aggregate emissions. Assess a \$75 billion assessment to be paid over 24 years resulting in \$3 billion/year for New York revenues.

(See "Legislative Priority Tracking" continued on page 7)

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY TRACKING *(continued from page 6)*

ESFPA opposed the original Climate Superfund bill but did not have a position on the Chapter Amendments since they generally improved some elements of what otherwise was a bad bill. A coalition of businesses are planning to challenge this legislation in court as in violation of several interstate commerce provisions and substantive provisions relating to strict liability.

Petroleum Bulk Storage Paint – SUPPORT A. 6466 (Septimo/S.1704 (Harckham))

This bill would amend Chapter 505 of the Laws of 2021 which amended the Environmental Conservation Law § 17-1016 adding a requirement that all Above Ground Storage Tanks (ASTs) have shells and/or roof painted white, beige, or cream to reduce air pollution from Petroleum Bulk Storage (PBS) Facilities. The requirement came into effect on January 1, 2024. Environmental groups and the regulated community have raised several concerns and complaints indicating the impracticality and difficulty in complying with the statute.

On January 8th, 2024, DEC issued a compliance memorandum looking for amended legislation. ESFPA did a MoS on April 23rd. S. 1704 passed the Senate on 3/10/25.

Establishing Contractual Requirements for Logging Agreements – OPPOSE – S. 5439 – (Oberacker)

Enacts provisions to protect property owners from timber theft; establishes contractual requirements for logging agreements.

ESFPA has serious concerns on the scope of this bill on private commercial agreements and contracts. We spoke with Senator Oberacker's Legislative Director and expressed concerns, and they are rethinking the bill. Their intent is consumer protection from bad actors.

Relates to Property Tax Exemptions Under RPTL 480a for Preservation of Forest Land and Payments to Municipalities – OPPOSE – S. 5603 (May)

Amends RPTL 480 and 480a and would allow conservation easements to be "certified properties" under 480a where such easements would allow for the provision of "wild forests" and prevent timber harvesting.

ESFPA is opposed to this change to RPTL 480a and has reached out to Senator May's Legislative Director.

Renewable Energy and Transmission in State Forests – OPPOSE – S. 4408 (May)

Relates to agreements, such as leases or easements, related to renewable energy development rights on State Reforestation areas.

ESFPA opposes this legislation as it undermines the statutory intent of State Reforestation Areas for fiber and timber supply and recreational and wildlife activities.

NYS DEC 2025 REGULATORY AGENDA

Each year, pursuant to State Administrative Procedures Act (SAPA), the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) publishes a Regulatory Agenda in the State Register and on its website. This is a listing of the regulations that may be proposed for adoption or amendment within that calendar year that may impact the forest management and wood product manufacturing sector. It is important to note that this is prospective and not necessarily everything which may be promulgated.

Division of Air Resources

6 NYCRR Part 218: Revisions to Part 218, "Emission Standards for Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicle Engines," and Section 200.9 "Referenced Material" (for incorporation by reference) to incorporate all, or portions of, the State of California's Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulation. This regulation was adopted in California in 2023 and includes medium and heavy-duty truck fleet purchase requirements for three fleet categories: drayage trucks, high priority & federal fleets, and state and local government fleets. The ACF regulation also includes a medium- and heavy-duty manufacturer 100% zero emission truck sales requirement beginning in 2036. This is for emission standards and not necessarily for Electric Vehicles (EVs).

6 NYCRR Part 218: Revisions to Part 218, "Emission Standards for Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicle Engines," and Section 200.9 "Referenced Material" (for incorporation by reference) to incorporate updates to the State of California's Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) regulation. This regulation will be adopted in California in 2025 and includes more stringent greenhouse gas standards, improved window stickers, and minor updates to reduce light- and medium-duty vehicle emissions.

6 NYCRR Part 218: Revisions to Part 218, "Emission Standards for Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicle Engines," and Section 200.9 "Referenced Material" (for incorporation by reference) to incorporate updates to the State of California's Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) regulation. California is expected to adopt amendments to this regulation in 2025 that include additional manufacturer compliance flexibilities and minor clarifications. This standard includes EV mandates for medium and heavy-duty trucks, including 100% sales of EVs by 2036. The ACT Rule is currently subject to intense legislative pressure for amendments and delay in implementation.

6 NYCRR Part 229, "Petroleum and Volatile Organic Liquid Storage and Transfer." This proposal will include amendments to reduce emissions from petroleum and volatile organic liquid storage and transfer.

6 NYCRR Part 253, "Mandatory Greenhouse Gas Reporting Rule." As part of the State's ongoing efforts to gather information regarding sources of air pollutant emissions and to support the reduction of emissions to meet the statutory mandates of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, Chapter 106 of the Laws of 2019 (Climate Act), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) is establishing a mandatory greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting program that would require certain GHG emission sources to report emissions to the Department. Emission sources greater than 10,000 metric tons or more of CO₂e are required to report by July 2027. **The rule was published on April 4, 2025, with public comment due July 1, 2025. Public hearings to be held in June 2025.**

(See "Regulatory Agenda" continued on page 8)

REGULATORY AGENDA *(continued from page 7)*

Division of Environmental Permits

6 NYCRR Part 617, "State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)". DEC proposes to amend the regulations that implement SEQR to incorporate consideration of environmental justice in SEQR reviews (as required by Chapter 49 of the Laws of 2023). Specifically, whether an action will cause or increase a disproportionate pollution burden, as criteria for determining the significance of the action. DEC expects to make conforming changes to the environmental assessment forms in 6 NYCRR 617.20 along with ancillary amendments to other provisions in 6 NYCRR. DEC also expects to amend the list of Type II actions set out in 6 NYCRR 617.20 (that are not subject to further review under SEQR). These would include Type II actions related to the addition of certain multifamily housing and inclusion of approvals issued by the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (to conform with statutory changes that excluded such actions from SEQR review). DEC also expects to make general housekeeping changes to the regulations including the environmental assessment forms. An additional objective is to strengthen provisions of the environmental assessment form on climate change including questions to further implement the Community Risk and Resiliency Act (Chapter 355 of the Laws of 2019 as amended by Chapter 106 of the Laws of 2019). **This rule was published on January 29, 2025, with public comment due May 7, 2025.**

6 NYCRR Part 621, "Uniform Procedures Act (UPA)". DEC proposes to amend the UPA as required by Chapter 49 of the Laws of 2023. The changes would incorporate analysis of environmental justice into certain UPA permits. Specifically, whether an action may cause or increase a disproportionate pollution burden on a disadvantaged community and set out the minimum requirements for an existing burden report in 6 NYCRR Chapter IV, Subtitle H (Environmental Justice).

Division of Fish & Wildlife

6 NYCRR Part 182, "Endangered and threatened fish and wildlife." The existing regulation will be updated to revise the lists of endangered, threatened and special concern species. Last year amendments included updating federally listed species and certain aquatic species. ESFPA expects amendments this year to update all other species.

Division of Lands & Forests

6 NYCRR Part 199, "Taxation of Forest Land." Amend the existing regulations to update them and provide effective administration of the program by lessening the administrative burden on participants and provide clarity for addressing issues and situations that arise due to changing circumstances associated with private forest land ownership. **The proposed regulation was published in November 2024 with public comments due on January 27, 2025. ESFPA submitted comments and we expect to see final regulations in the summer of 2025 with amendments effective in March 2026.**

6 NYCRR Part 575, "Prohibited and Regulated Invasive Species." Amend sections 575.3, Prohibited Invasive Species and 575.4, Regulated Invasive Species to update these lists. The purpose of this Part is to establish procedures to identify and classify invasive species and to establish a permit system to restrict the sale, purchase, possession, propagation, introduction, importation, and transport of invasive species in New York, as part of the Department of Environmental Conservation's statewide invasive species management program, as required by ECL sections 9-1709 and 71-0703.

FEDERAL CORNER

FIRST 100 DAYS



President Donald J. Trump has completed his first 100 days in office. As like any new president, the first 100 days are somewhat of a grace period (affording the opportunity to set their agenda) and a test as to how will the new President's agenda be accepted by Congress and the American people. President Trump has certainly hit the ground running and, as the New York Times has said, "a study of extremes." He has:

- Issued more Executive Orders than any president in history at – more than 135.
- Triggered an explosion of lawsuits – over 200. Although the Supreme Court has begun considering aspects of a few cases, most of this litigation is in the preliminary stages.

- Markets have turned on his policies. The S&P 500 has fallen by more than 7 percent since Trump's inauguration, on track for the worst performance for stocks in this period of a presidency since Gerald Ford in 1974. Treasury yields and the dollar have declined as recession risks have increased and global investors have soured on U.S. assets.
- When he entered office, voters said they trusted him to handle the economy and immigration. But 100 days into his second term, his approval is underwater. Partly it is because he turned those long-term strengths on the economy and immigration into weaknesses.

With a new Congress and a new Administration, much attention has been paid to what will happen in the first 100 days of a second Trump Administration. It is a fact that the GOP controls both houses of Congress and the White House, but the margin of control remains markedly slim, particularly in the House. With a couple of House Members departing for roles in the incoming Administration, and mixed results in special elections, the

(See "First 100 Days" continued on page 9)

FIRST 100 DAYS *(continued from page 8)*

GOP now has a 2-seat margin of control with two remaining vacancies. Republican majority in the Senate of 53 seats to the Democrats' 47 seats, including two independents who caucus with Democrats is narrower in number but stronger than in the House. This new majority gives Senate Republicans the power to shape committee assignments and control over the Senate's agenda, including budgetary and policy discussions that could have wide-ranging impact on industries from health care to energy.

Add in the fact that there are factions of House Republicans with differing priorities—for example, Northeast and Pacific Coast Republicans that want state and local tax (SALT) deduction relief v. fiscal conservatives that wish to curtail spending—and the path forward begins to look complicated. With that said, the new (and returning) Republican leadership and President Trump have thus far been very clear about policy items they wish to address, including the following:

Comprehensive Budget Reconciliation Bill – The Big Beautiful Bill

As of April 30, 2025, budget reconciliation talks are in progress, with both the House and Senate working to pass a concurrent budget resolution that includes reconciliation instructions. The focus is on extending and potentially making permanent some provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, as well as addressing President Trump's other fiscal priorities and substantial spending cuts.

Making the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) business tax deductions permanent is the leading goal for the House and Senate. The deductions are due to expire at the end of this year. The nonpartisan Congressional researchers estimate it would cost \$4.6 trillion over a decade. Thus far, the House is moving things along quickly and the Senate is in lockstep with reauthorization. But the goal of adoption by Memorial Day has now slipped to the Fourth of July. Time is not on anyone's side.

Major elements of the changes include reducing tax rates for corporations and individuals, increasing the standard deduction and family tax credits, eliminating personal exemptions, and making it less beneficial to itemize deductions, limiting deductions for state and local income taxes and property taxes. Notably, the \$10,000 cap on the deduction for state and local income taxes against federal taxes would be lifted, and interest on mortgages up to \$1,000,000 would be deductible (up from \$750,000).

House Republicans are aiming to craft a legislative package that would also authorize additional budget cuts, raise the debt ceiling, and boost defense spending and funds to increase security along the U.S.-Mexico border. But there are major differences among Republicans, including over the targets themselves. House committees are instructed to cut at least \$1.5 trillion in spending; the Senate has just \$4 billion as a floor for spending cuts. To get the budget blueprint to pass the House, Senate GOP leaders publicly committed to finding larger spending cuts than what was included in the resolution itself. But bridging that divide will not come easily. Now they must roll up their sleeves and figure out how to dramatically cut Medicaid, student loans, and food aid programs that are popular not only in Democratic districts, but in a lot of Republican districts as well.

Immigration

The President and Republicans in the House and Senate campaigned throughout last cycle on the need for tightening the border, particularly our border with Mexico. Threading the needle on immigration reform in Congress has proven to be elusive, however. One of the complicating variables is that so many sectors—including agriculture and forestry—rely on immigrant labor to perform critical work like crop harvesting and hand planting tree seedlings following timber harvests. While these workers are in the U.S. legally on foreign guestworker visas, labor unions and anti-immigration groups claim that these workers are taking jobs from U.S. workers. We expect Congressional action will come later this year.

Energy

A prominent feature of many campaigns last year was the assertion that increased costs on everyday items is a direct result of rising energy prices. Already there are executive orders promoting increased energy supply and permitting reform to expedite fossil fuel projects. Permitting reforms specifically modifying the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) review process to make it more streamlined and efficient. We have also seen the termination of federal leases affecting offshore wind here in New York. Just how far the Administration can go before legislative action is necessary we shall see.

And Not Least – Tariffs

The impacts of Trump's trade and tariffs policies continue to dominate the conversation in D.C. Last week it was announced that there are currently 17-19 countries currently in discussions with U.S. government officials hoping to cut a deal on trade with the U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has indicated that a deal is imminent with one unnamed country pending sign off from that country's leadership. Although important hardwood trading partners including Vietnam and Japan are on the current list, Canada, Mexico, the E.U. and most importantly China are not included. Although the Trump Administration has indicated that there are ongoing conversations with China, China has denied that meaningful discussions are underway.

The Trump Administration does seem to be adjusting their positioning over recent weeks. In addition to announcing ongoing trade discussions, the President also signed an order easing the impact of his auto tariffs by lifting some levies on foreign parts for cars and trucks made inside the U.S. However, as we have noted more than once, the Trump trade policy evolves on a seemingly daily basis.

The bottom line is that the first 100 days have been action packed for both the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches of our federal government. Whether Congress will produce any meaningful budgetary or legislative action to really change policy remains to be seen, but if history is any guide the table will certainly be set for action later this year. And as always, how public sentiment swings over these coming months will have profound impacts on Congress.

Executive Orders on Forests and Wood Products

On Saturday, March 1st, the White House issued an Executive Order ***Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production***.

(See "First 100 Days" continued on page 10)

FIRST 100 DAYS *(continued from page 9)*

The Order carries the following directives:

- Within 30 days, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture shall each issue new or updated guidance regarding tools to facilitate increased timber production and sound forest management, reduce time to deliver timber, and decrease timber supply uncertainty. The Departments shall also submit to the Office of Management and Budget any legislative proposals that would expand authorities to improve timber production and sound forest management.
- Within 60 days, the Departments of Interior and Commerce shall complete a strategy on USFS and BLM forest management projects under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1536) to improve the speed of approving forestry projects. The Department of the Interior, through the Director of the FWS, shall also examine any applicable existing authorities that would permit executive departments and agencies to delegate consultation requirements under section 7 of the ESA to other agencies and, if necessary, provide a legislative proposal to ensure consultation is streamlined.
- Within 90 days, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture shall together submit a plan that sets a target for the annual amount of timber per year to be offered for sale over the next 4 years from Federal lands managed by the BLM and the USFS, measured in millions of board feet.
- Within 180 days, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture shall consider and adopt categorical exclusions to reduce unnecessarily lengthy processes and associated costs related to approvals for timber production, forest management, and wildfire risk reduction treatments.
- All relevant agencies shall eliminate, to the maximum extent permissible by law, all undue delays within their respective permitting processes related to timber production.

Also on March 1st, the White House issued a second Executive Order ***Addressing the Threat to National Security from***

Imports of Timber, Lumber. This Order addresses the effects on national security of imports of timber, lumber, and their derivative products. The EO directs the Secretary of Commerce to assess the following factors related to domestic lumber production for national defense, impact on foreign competition on the welfare of domestic industries:

- the current and projected demand for timber and lumber in the United States.
- the extent to which domestic production of timber and lumber can meet domestic demand.
- the role of foreign supply chains, particularly of major exporters, in meeting United States timber and lumber demand.
- the impact of foreign government subsidies and predatory trade practices on United States timber, lumber, and derivative product industry competitiveness.
- the feasibility of increasing domestic timber and lumber capacity to reduce imports; and
- the impact of current trade policies on domestic timber, lumber, and derivative product production, and whether additional measures, including tariffs or quotas, are necessary to protect national security.

Within 270 days the Secretary of Commerce will submit a report to the President that includes:

- findings on whether imports of timber, lumber, and their derivative products threaten national security.
- recommendations on actions to mitigate such threats, including potential tariffs, export controls, or incentives to increase domestic production; and
- policy recommendations for strengthening the United States timber and lumber supply chain through strategic investments and permitting reforms.

EUDR UPDATE

As we reported late in 2024, the European Union extended the deadline for the effective Date of the European Union Deforestation Rule one year to December 31st, 2025.

In March, a coalition representing the U.S. forest products value chain called on the Trump Administration to engage with European counterparts regarding the EU Regulation on Deforestation-Free Supply Chains, which threatens U.S. forest product exports to Europe starting in December 2025. While the regulation aims to prevent deforestation-linked products from entering the EU market, its stringent compliance requirements unfairly disadvantage the U.S. industry, which is a global leader in sustainable forest management.

The regulation's strict geolocation and traceability mandates are impractical given the scale of the U.S. supply chain and could disrupt \$3.5 billion in trade. Despite a delay in implementation, fundamental compliance challenges remain unresolved. U.S.

engagement is essential to ensure the EUDR does not impose unnecessary trade barriers that harm millions of private landowners, manufacturing jobs, and the broader U.S. forest products sector.

In April, the European Commission released updated FAQs and guidance documents to simplify the implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). These updates aim to reduce administrative burdens for companies by 30% and streamline processes such as due diligence statement submissions. Key changes include allowing annual submissions, reusing existing statements for reimported goods, and enabling authorized representatives to manage submissions on behalf of company groups. Overall, the changes favor EU countries and still do not address major concerns of the forest industry value chain, including geolocation requirements and details around low-risk countries. We do anticipate more guidance in the next couple of months.

ESFPA PARTICIPATES IN WASHINGTON FLY-INS

In April, ESFPA Executive Director John Bartow was invited to participate in several advocacy efforts in Washington D.C. Certainly interesting times to be in the nation's Capital and timing was perfect on several issues we discussed. We advocated for the Farm Bill, Forest Legacy funding, Land & Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) and several issues including trade & tariffs, Fix Our Forest Act, changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard and changes at EPA regarding water quality, endangered species, climate policy and workforce development. We advocated with the Farm Bill Coalition, American Loggers Council and the LWCF Coalition.



We also had the opportunity to meet with the recently appointed Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Kristen Sleeper who previously had worked for the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO). Congressional members were sent home early last week so most of our meetings were with staff, but we did have a few minutes with both Congressional Members Josh Riley and Nick Langworthy. In all, nine Congressional offices were visited and lots of follow-ups to happen. We also had requests for many summer tours so hopefully we will get a few in.

ESFPA NEWS

IF NOT WOOD, WHAT; IF NOT HERE, WHERE

Rob Riley, President of the Northern Forest Center, released a piece on forest management and the future of the forest-based economy in New England. Rob raises some extremely worthwhile points to ponder. While much of his piece focuses on the debate in New England on the management and use of public forestland in New England, he also raises the specter of the future of forest management and sustainable use of wood from private forest lands.

In New York, much of the discussion about managing and harvesting on public lands was put to rest long ago with the establishment of New York's Constitutionally protected Forest Preserve (Adirondacks and Catskills). The Forest Preserve is a valuable resource to New Yorkers and one we should be proud of. It has its purposes and benefits, but forest management and timber harvesting are not part of that. New York also has about 1 million acres of other state-owned forest which is set aside for parks, wildlife management areas and unique areas which too have extremely limited active forest management.

However, New York is also blessed with 15 million other acres of forest much of which does support a forest-based economy and a host of environmental benefits. There is about 1 million acres in State Reforestation Areas and county and local government forest-lands that is and can be managed for multiple benefits including supporting our forest-based economy. Yes, 14% of this forest is what some may call industrial owned by larger timber companies, but these can only yield so much fiber and timber. A significant number of our forest landowners are the 200,000 plus family forest owners who own 10 acres or more and a majority who own less than a few hundred acres.

The availability and quality of New York's forests rest largely upon the hundreds of thousands of family forest landowners who own these 14 million acres, 75% of the State's total forest land. These forest landowners account for over three-quarters of our freshwater wetlands, 60% of our stream corridors, nearly two thirds of the habitats for our species of greatest conservation concern, they are the linkages for our biological corridors of connectivity, and they are stewards of our surface

water watersheds and groundwater recharge areas. These forest landowners are also the source of 90+% of the timber and fiber that we source for our mills and export logs. They are the largest landscape feature that supports our rural forest-based economy.

The future of forest management in New York has more recently become weaponized depending on one's agenda. There is a movement afoot for "Proforestation", a philosophical exercise with the goal to ban active forest management. It has real policy implications for the future management (or non-management) of forests and how we deal with air quality, biological connectivity, climate change and water quality, while also sustainably managing our forests to provide products that society needs.

What New York needs is to have a forest policy that balances the imperatives of having forest reserves of protected and maturing forests that can store carbon, while providing the unique ecological benefits of mature forests, and also having sustainably managed forests that can yield renewable natural forest products that displace otherwise fossil fuel intensive products. Managed forests that yield financial benefits to private forest landowners to help them keep their forests as forest and build adaptive capacity and resilience to threats to forest health from invasive pests, pathogens, and climate impacts.

In March, ESFPA addressed a group of loggers and forest landowners at the New York Lumbermen's Trust annual meeting and put forth a proposal for directing the Wood Products Development Council to develop a Future Forest Road Map for our working forests and wood product manufacturers. Could we get behind a concerted effort to lay out specifics on the future of our wood products industry and our forests? We would like to hear from our members on the willingness to get beyond arguing about the future of our forests and adapt to a new forest future that has both reserved forests and working forests for the future of New York. We will be talking about this in the coming months and would welcome your input.

PASSING OF DENNIS J. PHILLIPS



It is with a heavy heart that we share the passing of ESFPA Counsel and Empire State Forestry Foundation Director, Dennis Phillips, who left us on Friday, February 7th.

Dennis was not just a valued colleague—he was a distinguished presence in the forest products industry and a pillar of the Adirondack community. His work touched every corner of our field, and his legacy is deeply woven into the history and future of the Empire State Forest Products Association. He was there at the re-incorporation and modern

creation of ESFPA in 1982, helping to shape the direction of the organization and championing its mission for over four decades.

For more than 50 years, Dennis practiced forest and land use law with unwavering dedication, representing countless ESFPA landowners, businesses, and organizations. His insight, intellect, and integrity made him not only a formidable advocate but also

a deeply trusted advisor to so many in our community. Dennis was known as a gentleman, a tireless defender of property rights, and an outstanding professional.

He brought wisdom, warmth, and sincerity to every conversation, and his contributions extended far beyond his legal expertise. As a devoted family man, mentor, and friend, Dennis had the ability to connect with people, always making time to listen, advise, and support those around him. His passing leaves a profound void—not only within ESFPA and the forestry community, but in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.

ESFPA is currently working on a meaningful way to honor Dennis’s extraordinary contributions to our association and the industry he so deeply loved. The ESFPA Board and Empire State Forestry Foundation (ESFF) will be planting a tree and placing a memorial plaque in memory of Dennis at Crandall Park in Glens Falls. We are also discussing ways we can coordinate with the Adirondack Experience in Blue Mountain Lake on an update to their logging exhibit with some recognition to Dennis who served on their Board. If anyone would like to contribute to ESFF for these memorial efforts, please contact Gabriella at Gabriella@esfpa.org or by phone at 518-463-1297.

He will be deeply missed, never forgotten, and forever appreciated.

LOG A LOAD FOR KIDS UPDATE

It’s that time of year again—time to share the annual Log-a-Load For Kids letter and implore everyone to give generously to our Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. To make what is usually a long letter short, we simply ask you to give because it’s a good thing to do.

After years of trying creative hooks, challenges, and gimmicks, we’ve learned that it’s the following facts that best illustrate how impactful your donations can be: They save lives. They change children’s lives for the better. They make the hardest day in a family’s life just a little bit easier. They make miracles happen.

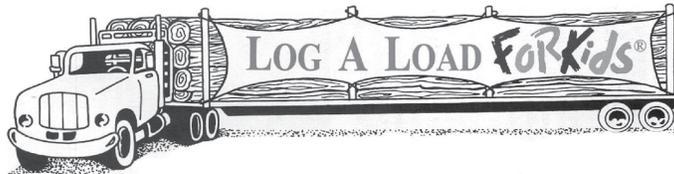
So, once more, we ask you to dig into your pockets, pour the change out of the truck cup holder, or sit down and write us a check. Make your donation count. Encourage other folks to do the same. Do it now. Help set the pace.

It’s really that simple.

In addition to your monetary support and generous donation of goods, this year we really need some extra physical help at the Woodsmen’s Field Days in Boonville, August 15-17.

Physical help produces spiritual well-being for all involved. Friendly hands make light work. We’ve seen many faces over

the years, all of them truly helpful and generous people. And we have a good time at the Log-A-Load booth. That’s part of why our volunteers come back year after year. It’s like playing in the rain—it might look crazy to onlookers, but everyone doing it is having a great time.



Our volunteer team had a very happy weekend at Woodsmen’s 2024, in part because respected

competitors and colleagues came by to help at the booth and spend time with our team. We all made new friends and got to know industry acquaintances better. As a tonic to all the current market craziness, let’s do it again. Whether it’s for a few minutes, hours, or all weekend, join our dedicated team of volunteers and be part of what makes Log-A-Load special.

No matter what you are able to give, this is something you can do. Join us at Boonville, see and meet industry friends, and **help raise money for children who need us — now more than ever.**

If you would like to donate an item for this year’s Woodsmen’s Field Days, please contact gabriella@esfpa.org or mark.mowrey75@gmail.com. To make a payment, call Dorian Johnson at (518) 463-1297 or Venmo @ESFF-LogALoad. Thank you for your support!

ALA FUTURE OF PRIVATE FORESTS CONFERENCE

On Saturday May 3rd, ESFPA participated in the Adirondack Landowners “Future of Private Forests” Conference at Adirondack Community College in Queensbury. Over 70 people from throughout the Park participated in the Conference, featuring a keynote address from Kim Elliman, retired CEO of the Open Space Institute and six key policy panels covering a range of topics for private forest landowners.

Executive Director John Bartow moderated a panel on Adirondack Forest Management Challenges: Opportunities and Professional Support. Thank you to ESFPA Board member and F&W Regional Forest Manager Tom Gilman, Finch Regional Forest Manager Len Cronin and Dr. Jenny Frank from SUNY ESF for participating on the panel.

ESFPA ON ‘FROM THE FOREST’ RADIO SHOW

On Wednesday May 7th, ESFPA Executive Director John Bartow joined the Catskill Forest Association’s ‘From the Forest’ radio show to speak about pressing policy issues

impacting New York State’s forests and forest products economy.

Check out the full podcast at fromtheforest.podbean.com.

ESFPA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MEAD LUMBER

By Nicholas Mead

Mead Lumber Co Inc. is a third-generation family-owned sawmill located in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains in Queensbury, New York. Our company was founded by my grandfather and father in 1975, and later expanded by my father, whose values and vision helped shape the business into what it is today. I purchased the company from him in 2021, and while he is now fully retired, I’m proud to carry on the legacy of producing high-quality Eastern White Pine while embracing new ideas and opportunities for growth.

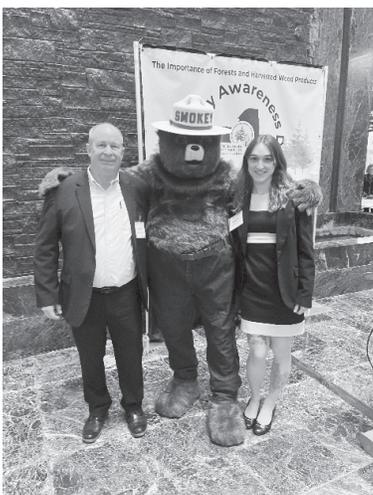
At Mead Lumber, we specialize in sawing and planing Eastern White Pine exclusively for post and beam construction, timber frame homes, and log cabins. We’re known for our ability to produce large-dimension and long-length timbers — up to 40 feet when absolutely necessary, but 18 to 30 feet on a regular basis. We offer both rough and planed options to meet a variety of customer needs. Our focus has always been on quality, and we work with local loggers and private contractors within

roughly a 50-mile radius to source our logs responsibly. We also offer kiln-dried log home timbers and tongue-and-groove siding, and we’re expanding into new markets such as kiln-dried 4x6 timbers for shed and cabin builders.

“Running a sawmill is about more than just lumber—it’s about stewardship of the forest, relationships with our customers, and pride in our product. I often say we may not be the cheapest, but we’re the best.”



FORESTRY AWARENESS DAY 2025



On Tuesday, March 4th, ESFPA held our annual Forestry Awareness Day in the Well at the Legislative Office Building in Albany.

We started off the day with some introductory speeches from Interim Commissioner Mahar, Senator Harckham, and Assemblymember Glick. Our members then attended a total of 50 legislative meetings where we discussed our 2025 budget & legislative priorities. We had a total of

33 meeting participants as well as 19 shadowing Paul Smith’s students. We are currently in the process of following up with the legislators.

Along with our legislative meetings, booths were set up by ESFPA affiliates for the purpose of education and outreach. These included the Northeastern Loggers Association, SUNY ESF, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York Forest Owners Association, Adirondack Landowners Association, Soil and Water Conservation District, and of course a guest appearance from Smokey Bear.

Overall, this year’s Forestry Awareness Day was successful, and we would like to thank everyone who attended! If you have any feedback on the event, please contact gabriella@esfpa.org. Thank you all for helping us achieve another great FAD!

OUTLOOK FOR LUMBER PRODUCTION IN 2025 ETC

By Hugh Canham

On Tuesday March 25th from 12 to 1 PM, Farm Credit East hosted an interesting Webinar on the outlook for US lumber production for 2025, featuring Paul Jannke, a forest economist with Forest Economic Advisors. Much of the time was spent on the overall economy and society and what is seen as the outlook for the year and beyond. Housing starts were a major topic. When it came specifically to the expected consumption of lumber, softwood lumber was most of the focus. However, there are some interesting insights for our New York forest products industry. Here is a summary of the main points that I noted.

Recently home mortgage payments have surged above the accepted average of 30% of household income. Tariffs and the resulting increase in imported lumber prices are not seen as the major factor. Rising insurance premiums due to wildfires, hurricanes, and tornados; pent up demand from the COVID pandemic; and rising interest rates due to many factors are the main drivers.

Do not look for large increases nationwide in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The leading economic indicators are trending down, and growth will slow down but the economy is still very robust. Imports overall are up right now as foreign firms rush to get products shipped into the US ahead of possible future tariffs. Some of the excess savings that occurred during COVID have been spent. The net result is that overall housing starts are expected to be flat but single-family housing starts are expected to rise slightly. Multi-family housing starts are declining partly due to uncertainty over the market for apartment units etc. A good sign is that household debt as a percentage of income is below recent levels.

Of particular interest to our New York industry is the increase in residential improvements. This is due to many factors: There are many aging houses with 50% having been built before 1980. Even though mortgage rates have increased, 60% of existing home mortgages are well below current rates. This tends to lead owners to improve their existing dwelling instead of buying a new one. Finally, the increase in home improvement opportunities has led to more contractors skilled in home renovation projects and willing to do this work.



US softwood lumber production is expected to increase by 1% in 2025 and 3% by 2026. Exports will be up but only slightly. A list of mill closures was shown but concentrated on softwood mills in the south and west. The feeling is that tariffs, if enacted with Canada, will be short-lived and

the administration sees them more as a negotiating tactic. However, this is uncertain what the objective is of increasing tariffs. The Chinese housing market is seen as in decline.

Specifically for the Northeastern US and New York industry there are some possible good signs. Home improvements and rebuilds are likely to rise in our region. Local cumbersome building codes, a shortage of cheap buildable lots, and the NIMBY feeling in many communities (Not In My Backyard) will lead to owners staying put. Two other factors are the increasing time that children are living at home after adulthood and the increase in working from home offices. Home improvements in the Northeast tend to use more hardwood in floors, kitchen cabinets, etc. than in other regions. It is unlikely that there will be a large increase in US or Northeast furniture manufacturing. The recent surge in the semiconductor and related computer chip industry in our area is seen as increasing the demand for wooden pallets, dunnage for shipping products, and dimension lumber for outfitting office and work spaces.

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NATIONAL HARDWOOD CONFERENCE

Date/Time: Aug 05, 2025 – Aug 07, 2025, All Day
Marriott Syracuse Downtown
100 East Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

The Third Biennial Northern Hardwood Conference will be held this August 5-7 in Syracuse, NY. Over the course of 2 conference days and a full day of field tours, attendees will share ideas, explore innovative management practices and cutting-edge technologies, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing northern hardwood silviculture. This

year's theme is "Romanticism vs reality: balancing passion and pragmatism in northern hardwood management." Discounted Early Bird pricing is available until June 30. Visit the NHC 2025 website for more details on Continuing Education credits, the full conference agenda, sponsorship opportunities and registration.



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Logo in programs, on website & at event	Small	Medium	Medium	Large
Table / booth in exhibitor area	✓	✓	✓	✓
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August 5-7, 2025
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Have questions about sponsorship, or want to learn about other ways to get involved? Please email Sara, sdreibel@syr.edu.



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