

Hardwood Products Access and Development Program

Recommendation: Create a competitive grant program in the Farm Bill to support consumer education about the sustainability, low carbon footprint, domestic production and rural economic impacts of U.S. made hardwood products based on the successful ACER Access Program for the domestic maple syrup industry (authorized by section 12306 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 and expanded through the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018).

Background: The U.S. hardwood industry is a multi-billion-dollar industry supporting over 1.8 million jobs, mostly in rural, underserved areas of the country. Although wood products are widely recognized as sustainably produced and have significant carbon storage capacity, public awareness and recognition of these qualities is limited. The domestic industry and domestically produced products, including flooring, cabinetry, doors, mouldings, and other hardwood building products are facing increasing competition from imported and competitor products that do not meet the high environmental standards set by U.S. manufactured hardwood products.

Ideas to create a federal program to support the domestic industry and meet carbon reduction goals:

- **Create and Fund a Hardwood Products Access and Development Program:** The program would support research efforts related to the environmental and health benefits of domestically produced hardwood products.
- **Eligible Applicants:** Non-profit organizations serving the U.S. hardwood sector, universities and research organizations.
- **Eligible Activities:** Research related to environmental and health benefits of domestic hardwood products, research related to consumer attitudes and knowledge of hardwood products, promotion of research to the public and potential consumers, demonstration projects highlighting environmental and health benefits of hardwood products.
- **Program Funding Levels:** \$25 million over five years. Grants to be in the \$500,000 to \$1.5 million range.
- **Matching Grant Requirements:** 50% (\$2 federal: \$1 applicant)
- **Targeted Award Criteria:** Prioritize proposals that support ongoing, domestic industry supported efforts and research that directly supports consumer and end-user information.