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August 6, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Chairman Johnson, and Ranking Member Merkley,

On behalf of the U.S. hardwood industry, the Hardwood Federation writes to encourage the Senate's swift action on the FY2027 Budget Resolution, which directs the House Agriculture Committee to develop up to \$12 billion in relief for American agriculture. Hardwood sawmills, loggers, and forestland owners have weathered a difficult economic stretch for nearly a decade, and this Resolution represents a meaningful opportunity to begin addressing that strain.

American agriculture as a whole has faced sustained hardship in recent years, with high input costs and weak commodity prices driving losses across row crops, specialty crops, and livestock alike. Hardwood has faced its own version of this pressure. Our industry's challenges trace back to 2018, when retaliatory tariffs disrupted export markets that had taken decades to build. Since then, American hardwood producers have watched competitors in Russia, Malaysia, and Thailand absorb market share once held by U.S. mills, resulting in more than \$9.8 billion in forgone sales. Domestic hardwood lumber production has fallen 48.3 percent over that period, a decline with real consequences for the roughly 1.8 million jobs the hardwood sector supports in Appalachia, the Midwest, the South, and the Northeast.

These are not abstract losses. When a sawmill closes, it rarely reopens; the skilled workforce disperses and the surrounding logging, trucking, and equipment businesses lose their primary customer. Many of these mills anchor the only significant employment base in their communities.

This is about far more than helping one industry. Support for hardwood reinforces a broader commitment to strengthening American manufacturing and rebuilding domestic supply chains.

U.S. hardwood is the foundation for countless American-made products, including flooring, cabinets, furniture, architectural millwork, railroad ties, and industrial pallets. A strong domestic hardwood sector is indispensable to reshoring manufacturing and reducing reliance on imported materials.

We recognize the scale of need across agriculture extends well beyond this \$12 billion, and we don't take for granted the difficult work ahead to direct it wisely. Still, advancing this Resolution is the necessary first step, and we're grateful for the House's action and for the Senate's continued attention to this issue. This is a practical, targeted step toward preserving American jobs, sustaining family-owned businesses, and strengthening rural communities at a time when these priorities have never been more important.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and your ongoing support for the rural communities and manufacturers who depend on a healthy hardwood industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dana Lee Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dana" being the most prominent.

Dana Lee Cole
Executive Director, The Hardwood Federation