



Mississippi Forestry Association

Legislative Bulletin

The Voice of Forestry

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Links: MFA Government Affairs

<http://www.msforestry.net/governmentaffairs.php>

MFA Online

www.msforestry.net

MFA Member

Question of the Week

Q: Am I able to watch my state senators on TV?

A. *TV, no. Internet, Yes!* Mississippians can now observe the state Senate and their senators in action via Mississippi Public Broadcasting's Web site. MPB is providing Internet broadcasts from the state Capitol in Jackson at www.mpbonline.org.

Contact Us

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MFA Government Affairs Committee

The MFA Government Affairs Committee will meet February 14 to review all forestry-related bills that have been introduced in the 2008 legislative session. Chaired by Dr. James P. Shepard of MSU, the committee will be recommending MFA's legislative positions to the Executive Committee for prompt review. The next issue will feature the bills we are working to pass or defeat, on behalf of Mississippi's entire forestry community.

MFA joins Green Building Coalition that Values Mississippi Products

The Mississippi Forestry Association and Mississippi Manufacturers Association will work during the 2008 session to ensure that state government's steps to "go green" do not restrict the use of Mississippi-made products in state buildings. The Mississippi Legislature considered bills in 2006 and 2007 that died due to disagreements on which green building standards to require — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or Green Globes.

MMA, the Mississippi Forestry Association, U.S. Chemistry Council, American Forest & Paper Association, the Carpenter's Union and other coalition partners have joined forces to ensure green building standards legislation in Mississippi doesn't discriminate against Mississippi-manufactured building products. Senator Tommy Moffatt, R-Gautier, chairman of the Senate's Environmental Protection, Conservation, and Water Resources Committee, has agreed to sponsor legislation that will recognize the environmental benefits provided by the use of wood products and encourage the use of home-grown and manufactured wood building materials. Moffatt's committee and the House Conservation and Water Resources Committee, chaired by John Mayo, D-Clarksdale, may hold a joint hearing on the issue.

Using green building standards that don't punish MFA members is vital to Mississippi's forest products industry, which employs more than 52,000 people with an annual payroll of more than \$1.6 billion. One in four manufacturing jobs in Mississippi is forestry-related. Timber is consistently in the top three agricultural crops in the state and creates \$11 billion a year in economic impact.

www.GrowTheVote.org



Editor's Note: MFA partners with the American Forest & Paper Association on many national issues of vital importance to MFA members.

With an election that will bring unprecedented changes to Washington, D.C. and state legislatures around the country, the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) is using 2008 to prepare for 2009.

AF&PA is on the front lines advocating for the forest products industry. The Congress and state legislatures are in full swing, and bills

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MFA's Mission is leading diverse forestry groups to promote landowner rights, environmental stewardship, member prosperity, and community understanding.

AF&PA is on the front lines advocating for the forest products industry. The Congress and state legislatures are in full swing, and bills that will undoubtedly affect the industry are already being considered. **Below are movements that may be of interest to you.**

Whole Foods Bans Plastic Bags

AF&PA commends the grocery retailer Whole Foods for its recent decision to promote paper bag usage among consumers by banning plastic bags in all of its stores.

This private company action follows the lead of many local governments that have passed, or are considering, bans on plastic bags, such as San Francisco, Boston, and Philadelphia, as well as many other jurisdictions.

AF&PA views the Whole Foods decision as a good sign for the paper bag market. The decision promotes a healthy environment, as paper bags are made from natural fiber obtained from a renewable resource – managed forests – and are also biodegradable.

Paper bags are, importantly, made from recycled material. In some cases, bags are made of 100 percent recycled paper.

Freedom to Mail

“Do Not Mail” bills have emerged in several states this month, and the trend promises to continue throughout 2008. These bills would have a negative effect on the use of paper-based communications by advertisers and other mailers.

In New Hampshire, AF&PA has lobbied aggressively to stifle HB 1506, which would establish a Do Not Mail registry. While the House Commerce Committee will not likely pursue the bill, AF&PA will remain vigilant in its opposition to the legislation.

The Vermont House Commerce Committee will consider HB 409, which establishes a Do Not Mail database and requires large businesses to pay a registration fee if they wish to access the database. Because of the importance of this issue to the industry, AF&PA is actively engaged in a coalition effort to defeat this measure.

Transportation

Maine Governor John Baldacci (D) signed a bill to temporarily allow trucks hauling forest products to exceed state weight limits by 5% to help offset high fuel prices. Baldacci signed the bill January 22, just hours after it was passed by the Maine House and Senate. Baldacci's administration is also working on legislation to ease taxes for truck drivers hauling forest products. The truck weight legislation takes effect immediately and expires April 1.

Ozone Standards

In an effort to curtail several billions of dollars in compliance costs for member facilities, AF&PA has been meeting with high ranking Administration officials about EPA's proposed rule that could significantly tighten the ozone (smog) standard. The tightened standard would put pressure on mills to control volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides at a potential cost of several billion dollars.

The meetings focused both on the lack of any new compelling health studies to warrant such revisions, and that the costs of tightening the standard far outweigh any health benefits. EPA is under a court mandate to issue the new ozone standard by March 8.

Clean Water

As part of a “Waters Advocacy Coalition,” AF&PA used the Congressional recess to brief members of the Administration on potential consequences for the industry that could arise from the “Clean Water Restoration Act” introduced by Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN) and Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI). The bill would change the term “navigable waters” to “waters of the U.S.” Officials at the Office of Management and Budget

Administration on potential consequences for the industry that could arise from the “Clean Water Restoration Act” introduced by Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN) and Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI). The bill would change the term “navigable waters” to “waters of the U.S.” Officials at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acknowledged there were questions about implementation and understood the Coalition’s concerns with the proposed language. *If the bills were enacted, normal forestry operations on private lands could be greatly encumbered with new regulatory burdens with little or no improvement in the environment.* In addition, mills would be faced with much more expensive, if not impossible, treatment requirements.

There may be House or Senate hearings on the Act early this year, in which case, AF&PA is optimistic that its meetings with OMB and EPA will inform the process and help address the industry’s concerns.

EarthJustice, lawyers for environmentalist groups, is trumpeting a poll that shows two-thirds of rural residents want water protected. However, this should not be equated to mean that rural Americans want the federal government controlling the ponds and streams on their property.

Get involved!

Do you have a grassroots update from your home state? Got an idea to make our voice more prominent on the Hill and in state and local governments? Contact AF&PA’s PAC/Grassroots Director Anita Peduzzi if you wish to get involved or for additional information (202-463-2755, anita_peduzzi@afandpa.org).