



AF&PA News

A News Release from the American Forest & Paper Association

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AF&PA Remarks on State of the Union Address

The American Forest & Paper Association applauds President Bush and Congressional leaders for making swift passage of the economic growth package a bipartisan priority for the nation.

The downturn in the nation's economy, especially the housing market, has had a significant effect on the forest products industry. U.S. production of wood products declined 20% from late 2005 to November 2007, largely resulting from a nearly 50% downturn in housing starts over that same period. As a result, the wood products side of the industry has shed 65,000 jobs or 11% of its workforce over the last two years.

Many of these jobs are situated in rural communities where the opportunity to find other well-paying jobs is limited, and increasing economic pressures of higher food and energy costs are taking their toll on millions of American workers and their families.

President Bush called on Congress to act quickly to get much needed tax rebates into the hands of these families and deliver assistance to small businesses. The growth package also would increase the limits on mortgage loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration and those purchased by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, giving many Americans a chance to stay in their homes.

AF&PA President and CEO Donna Harman urged Congress to act swiftly on the bipartisan package and send it to the President's desk for his signature.

"The bipartisan economic growth proposal, together with the Federal Reserve Bank's action to lower rates last week, are reasonable and well-targeted policies to stabilize the markets and keep our country moving forward," said AF&PA President and CEO Donna Harman. "Americans need to know their elected officials are putting aside their differences and acting to strengthen the economy and assist working families. Developed by Congressional Democrats and Republicans working together with the Administration, this legislative package makes a big step in that direction."

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AF&PA is the national trade association of the forest, paper and wood products industry. AF&PA represents companies and related associations that engage in or represent the manufacture of pulp, paper, paperboard and wood products. The forest products industry accounts for approximately 6 percent of total U.S. manufacturing output, employs more than one million people, and ranks among the top ten manufacturing employers in 42 states. Visit AF&PA online at www.afandpa.org