The Link

Newsletter | August 2026

HMA

From the Desk of HMA's President

by Brian Schilling
President, HMA

Here we are in the dog days of summer. Families are trying to get those last few summer activities in before the kids return to school. In most years, our company efforts turn to filling our log inventories in preparation for the almost certain wet period that will hamper harvest activities during the transition to colder temperatures. At the same time, our industry continues to face complications arising from uncertainties, many of which are out of our control.

Just like the companies that make up our membership, the HMA staff and leadership are working hard to adapt to the changing business climate. We remain focused on what I consider to be our calling card: Regional Meetings. Plans are being finalized for our Fall Regional tours in the Mid-Atlantic states, which will take place September 30–October 2. HMA tours return a great value in my opinion. While I agree that there are not many new secrets, I almost always find something on each of the stops to take back home and discuss. It also is a great opportunity to bring along younger, less experienced co-workers to expose them to different processes and equipment. In addition, they will have the opportunity to establish contacts with peers from other companies. Please make your plans to attend and get registered soon. You'll find the details on the next page.

Also, like all in our industry, HMA is adjusting to the new norm. We are working on ways to expand our reach, retain and even increase our membership, all while controlling costs. Last month, a large group participated in a planning call for our 2027 National Conference to be held next March, in Savannah, Georgia. There was a lot of valuable feedback from this year's attendees regarding what worked and what might be improved. We received a long list of potential topics for speakers and panel discussions, and I'm excited to see how NatCon 2027 comes together. I hope you plan on joining us in Savannah.

Brian

NTC is Offering its Mill Technology Certificate Program this Fall

Northcentral Technical College, HMA's partner in education, is offering its Mill Technology Certificate Program, from **September 28–October 30**, at the NTC Wood Technology Center of Excellence in Antigo, Wisconsin. The program is designed for individuals seeking practical experience in sawmill operations. Learners develop knowledge and skills via a hands-on, immersive learning experience, using state-of-the-art equipment in NTC's new training sawmill. Focus areas include:

- Log identification, scaling, and grading
- Hardwood lumber grading
- Sawmill safety and operator maintenance
- Quality control and industry metrics
- Steam and dehumidification kiln operations
- Sawmill machine centers: double-cut band headrig, horizontal resaw and preturning workstation, two-saw optimized edger and a two-saw double-end trimmer

Learners also will develop essential best practices related to sawmill safety, lumber manufacturing, and basic maintenance tasks in a commercial-scale sawmill environment.

The program is limited to 12 participants. Flexible course bundles also are offered. More details and registration information can be found at **NTC.edu**. Grant funds are available to offset costs.

Registration is Open for HMA's 2026 Fall Regional Meeting

HMA is heading to Tennessee and Virginia for its 2026 Fall Regional Meeting, which will take place **Wednesday–Friday, September 30–October 2**. The event will kick off with an HMA Board of Directors Meeting on Wednesday. HMA members and NextGen Leader's Council members arriving early may attend, but participation is reserved exclusively for HMA Officers and Board members. The event will continue with facility tours on Thursday and Friday.

To date, confirmed tour sites on our road trip through the Mid-Atlantic states include New River Hardwoods' three facilities located in Mountain City and Roan Mountain, Tennessee; Koppers' plant in Roanoke, Virginia; and Stella-Jones' plant in Goshen, Virginia. You won't want to miss seeing these facilities in person and engaging in the camaraderie that comes along with one of HMA's signature events.

Check **HMAmembers.org** for updates as more details and additional tour stops become available.

Registration is Open

Online registration is available at **HMAmembers.org**.

- **$275** | HMA Members, Promotion Contributors, and 2026 National Conference Exhibitors
- **$600** | Non-Members

If you're a first-time HMA Regional Meeting attendee or a NextGen Leaders Council member, email Ian Faight at **ian@hardwood.org** for special discount offers.

Book Your Stays Today

You read that right, the two-city logistics of this meeting require reservations at two hotels.

- For **Wednesday, September 30**, book a one-night stay at the Holiday Inn Johnson City (101 W. Springbrook Drive, 37604). Rooms can be booked **online** or by calling **423.262.1573**. Mention the Hardwood Manufacturers Association to secure our discounted room rate of $121. Remember to check out Thursday morning.
- For **Thursday, October 1**, make a one-night reservation at the Holiday Inn Roanoke Conference Center (3315 Ordway Drive, 24017). Rooms can be booked **online** or by calling **540.362.4500**. Be sure to mention the Hardwood Manufacturers Association to get our discounted room rate of $129.

These discounted rates are available until **Monday, September 7**, or until the group block is sold-out.

Traveling by Air?

If you're planning on flying into Johnson City, look for flights into Tri-Cities Regional Airport. Attendees who are riding the bus on Friday and flying home should reach out to Geoff Nelson at **geoff@hardwood.org**. HMA will arrange dropoffs at the Charlottesville–Albemarle Airport and Roanoke Blacksburg Regional Airport only if requested in advance by September 7.

Front and Center Exposure for Your Company

Are you looking to stand out from the crowd? Gain extra exposure for your company by becoming a Regional Meeting sponsor! Your support truly enhances our event. To say "Thank You," HMA will recognize your company in *The Link* and *Mid-Month Update* newsletters, at HMAmembers.org, and on social media.

To secure your sponsorship, reach out to Ian Faight at **ian@hardwood.org**.

Available sponsorships include:

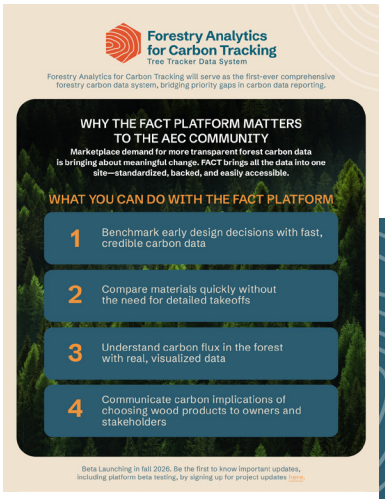
- **$1,000 Gold Sponsorship**
  Choice of hosting Thursday's lunch or bus transportation; or co-hosting Thursday's cocktail reception or dinner. *(This sponsorship includes one complimentary meeting registration.)*
- **$500 Silver Sponsorsip**
  Choice of registration bags, lanyards, safety vests, bus refreshments, or Friday's bus transportation.

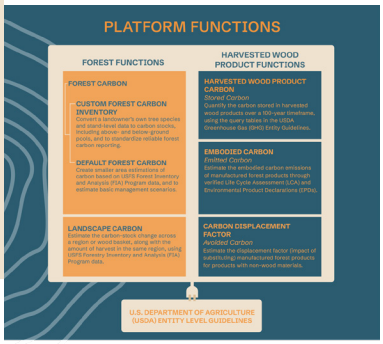
Help Tell the Hardwood Industry's Carbon Story

The HMA is partnering with the American Wood Council, Decorative Hardwoods Association, Hardwood Fedration, National Hardwood Lumber Association, National Wood Flooring Association, and a number of other industry association's on the Forestry Analytics for Carbon Tracking (FACT) Platform—the first-ever, comprehensive forest carbon data system. The FACT Platform will track data from U.S. forest lands, harvested wood products, and end-use Life-Cycle Assessments to provide transparent information to all who grow, produce, use, and research products made from American forests.

Over the coming months, hardwood producers will be hearing more from the HMA and other collaborating associations about the FACT Platform, as well as a series of six online tools that were developed to capture crucial data to support the hardwood industry, backed by factual information.

A beta launch of the FACT Platform is on schedule for fall 2026. HMA members are encouraged to beta test the platform and share feedback. Keep an eye open for more details in the months ahead.





Support the American Hardwood Industry with Your Data

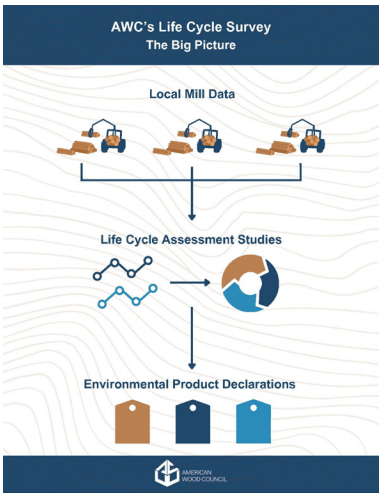
In collaboration with the American Wood Council (AWC), National Hardwood Lumber Association (NHLA), and allied associations, HMA is working to supply data to develop industry-wide Life-Cycle Assessments (LCAs) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for American hardwood products.

As HMA members know, the hardwood industry has a story to tell about why American hardwoods are the quintessential green building product. However, data is critical when telling that story to design/build professionals and everyday consumers, as well as when comparing sustainable and natural American hardwood products from highly processed, wood-look alternatives that are largely sourced from non-renewable and unhealthy materials.

To gather data and move this important project forward, hardwood mills and facilities are being asked to complete an online survey to track all materials and processes involved in production during 2025. Data fields include: input materials, products, and waste, among others. Survey results will be analyzed and utilized to produce LCA studies and EPDs.

Company owners, chief financial officers, and operation managers can **complete the survey online.**

AWC has produced a **video tutorial** as a guide for completing the survey. Questions can be directed to Adam Robertson at **adam@sustainatree.ca**.



Hardwood-Framed Window Walls

by Wendy Silverstein

Walls of windows or sliding doors have become a defining feature of contemporary houses, but glass alone doesn't make a room feel finished—it needs a frame. American hardwoods, work as mullions, jambs, and sills, give that frame character, structure, and craft. Where vinyl or aluminum reads as purely functional, wood articulates the module of a window wall, casts a warm border around the view, and ages with a patina that metal and plastic just can't match. It's also robust: dimensionally stable species like white oak and maple hold tight tolerances across long spans, letting expansive glazing feel both structurally sound and visually inviting. Three houses—each with a different climate, view, and personality—show some of the possibilities.

A wall of windows framed with flat-sawn white oak in a Eugene, Oregon, courtyard house by Waechter Architecture. Photo by Lara Swimmer

Waechter Architecture wrapped the exterior of this Eugene, Oregon, courtyard house in weathering steel, then turned to **Sierra Pacific Windows** for a warmer counterpoint in the living areas where walls of glass face the courtyard and adjoining meadow. Framed in flat-sawn white oak with matte-black finished hardware, the rows of fixed-pane units—interspersed with swing doors and awning half-windows—read as a continuous band of honey-toned wood threading through the metal clad pavilions. Inside, the same white oak reappears as flooring and quartersawn cabinetry, so the window frames feel less like an insert than an extension of the house's burnished interior material palette.

Maple window framing in the main bedroom of an Noth Bend, Washington, by Thielsen Architects. Photo by Art Grice

Perched on a wooded cliff above a creek in North Bend, Washington, this house by **Thielsen Architects** turns almost entirely toward the view. In the primary suite, **Kolbe** and Kolbe Ultra fixed and awning windows run floor to ceiling along one entire wall and part of another, their clear-maple frames—finished on-site by the project's painter—forming a continuous grid against the surrounding canopy. A run of clerestory lights above the main bank pulls in additional daylight, while the same maple wraps the built-in headboard and cabinetry, dissolving the line between window frame and room. The effect is less a bedroom with a view than a room built around one.

Golden-finished white-oak framed doors and picture windows in a Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, house by McInturff Architects. Photo by Julia Heine

In this Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, getaway house, **Mark McInturff Architects** opened the main living level almost entirely to the cove: trim-free **Weather Shield** sliding doors paired with fixed picture windows run wall to wall along the water side, the white-oak frames' golden finish providing warmth and color against an interior of exposed steel and all-white finishes. The doors pull the water into the space—when open, the interior becomes an airy porch. The rich amber framing reads as a thin, continuous line between the room's cool palette and the cove beyond, doing quiet work against a busy structural backdrop.

Wendy Silverstein is a former editor at Architectural Digest, Home, Kitchen & Bath Customer Planner, and Home/Style magazines. A consultant to the design industry, she works closely with interior designers, architects, and other professionals in the field.

American Hardwoods™

HMA Promotion $s at Work

Visit **HardwoodInfo.com** for more content to share with your audiences and prospective customers. Features like ***Hardwood-Framed Window Walls*** are posted each month.

To learn more about the American Hardwood Information Center's promotion and education initiatives, reach out to **info@hardwood.org**.

A Deeper Dive into Key Issues on Capitol Hill

by Dana Lee Cole
Executive Director, Hardwood Federation

Hardwood Industry Relief Still Alive

We are rapidly approaching the dog days of summer, and Congress has already departed for the August recess (the House of Representatives) or is looking at exiting (the U.S. Senate). Regardless, there is much work for Congress to address during the relatively few days they will be in session between now and the end of the year. We are hopeful that one of those things will be passing the $12 billion agriculture relief package that includes funds specifically for the U.S. hardwood industry. The package was included in the House-passed budget resolution in July and is now sitting in the Senate. This is one path to success, but there are a few others if this doesn't work. The Federation remains focused on getting this package across the finish line and we have tremendous support from House Agriculture Committee Chair GT Thompson (R-PA), who has repeatedly stressed that the dollars will go to "row crops, specialty crops, and hardwood."

Below is a recap of the Federation's recent activities:

- **Increased** man-power by hiring Monument Advocacy to provide additional support, outreach, strategic thinking, and resources.
- **Developed** a simple funding proposal to provide hardwood processors with bridge funding to ensure viability as markets settle.
- **Met** on a regular basis with the White House and U.S. Department of Agriculture to secure support for our funding proposal.
- **Secured** support from House and Senate Agriculture Committee chairmen for the proposal.
- **Initiated** a **letter** signed by more than 450 members of the hardwood industry that was shared with Congress and the White House, educating policy makers and raising awareness of the serious situation.
- **Created** a **website** dedicated to our effort targeted at media and Congress to serve as a one stop informational portal.
- **Raised** public (and further Congressional) awareness by generating media coverage in over 40 markets, amplifying the voice of industry company leaders and employees.
- **Successfully included** $200 million in funding specifically for the hardwood industry in the Agriculture Supplemental funding currently in play.

The path to our current position has been full of twists and turns, but that, unfortunately, is how things all too often happen in Washington, D.C. Our expectation was never that this would happen quickly, but our promise—one that we have kept—was that we would remain focused and diligent.

We will continue to pursue this much needed relief for the industry until the very last day of the current Congressional session. Thank you for the support from our funders, association members, and all those that worked with the media to share the hardwood story.

Trade and Uncertainty Continues

The trade waters have been somewhat calm since the Supreme Court struck down the Trump Administration's global tariffs on imports to the U.S. in February. However, that all changed in late July with a flurry of announcements and threats from the U.S. Trade Administrator and the White House. New tariffs or potential trade actions were announced, causing a mix of confusion, concern, and—for some in the wider U.S. business community—celebration.

Below is a breakdown of actions from the White Houe:

- The White House announced a 50% tariff on about $20 billion worth of Canadian imports, equivalent to about 5% of the total coming across the border from our neighbor up north. Unless Canada addresses grievances on autos, dairy, and alcoholic beverages, the new levies are set to take effect on August 19. One of the biggest surprises with this action is that it removes the exemption for USMCA compliant goods and materials, which have covered most hardwood products. The potential tariffs are of particularly impactful for veneer, plywood, and door manufacturers. However, companies that do business with Canada should carefully examine the list of HTC codes that fall under the new guidance; not every hardwood product is covered.

  To impose these tariffs, the Administration invoked Section 338 of the 1930 Tariff Act (also known as Smoot–Hawley) which has never been used for this purpose. The Act can be used with discrimination against U.S. goods. Pundits believe there will be legal challenges to the action and if upheld by the courts, could serve as a blue print for further uses of the Act.

  International drug manufacturers were put on notice that they have two years to move production to the U.S. or face a 100% duty staring in August 2028.

- An additional 25% tariff on imports from Brazil took effect under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. Wood and wood products are included in goods that are impacted, although some specialty wood pulp is excluded. This is on top of already existing tariffs making Brazil one of the more heavily tariffed trading partners.
- Duties between 10% and 12.5% on imports from 60 trading partners were announced. The cited reason for the action was to target countries that don't have or don't enforce existing rules forbidding forced labor in their supply chain. The action was taken under Section 301, and effectively replaced the tariffs that were imposed to replace those struck down by the Supreme Court earlier in the year…so the third version of tariffs imposed on the same group of countries, each using a different trade authority.
- The President announced the initiation of a Section 301 investigation into fines imposed by the EU on Alphabet Inc.'s Google, leading to new uncertainty in the U.S.–EU trade relationship.

Still outstanding is the 301 investigation into overcapacity production in a number of countries including China, Vietnam, and India. Announcements may wait for the upcoming U.S.–China meeting in September, and after November elections take place. All this is to say that the Trump Administration has not softened their position that imposing tariffs is an impactful tool for securing trade and domestic manufacturing goals. It is safe to say that litigation will continue to challenge these policies, including two lawsuits initiated in opposition to the 301 tariffs.

Clearly, trying to decipher and simplify everything that is going on is a challenge. And it is important to remember that tariffs are a two-way street. While in some cases they can be helpful to industry sectors by keeping subsidized or circumvented products from competing unfairly with U.S. made products, they can also lead to retaliatory tariffs that negatively impact U.S. products. Finding the perfect balance is tricky, as is navigating the activity around trade policy.

Farm Bill Debate Continues to Drag On

Congress is working towards renewing the comprehensive statute known as the Farm Bill that underpins our nation's row crop, and dairy programs—as well as nutrition, forestry, and many renewable energy initiatives. The last time the law was overhauled and renewed was in 2018; however, row crop and dairy subsidies, as well as nutrition programs were addressed last year in H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The current effort is focused on programs that the Federation cares about in the Forestry and Energy Titles left out of the measure.

Following House passage of the Farm, Food, and National Security Act (H.R. 7567) in April, Senator John Boozman (R-AR) released the Agricultural Act of 2026—colloquially known as Farm Bill 2.0. Chairman Boozman continues to believe that his panel can markup the measure before the upper chamber leaves town for the August recess. The bill largely mirrors the House-approved product that includes a number of Hardwood Federation policy priorities. Among them are:

- **Jobs in the Woods Act:** Amends the existing Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) program to specifically include forestry and forest products. This language essentially captures the Jobs in the Woods Act (JWA), which would provide grants of between $500,000 and $2 million to stand up job training and career pathway programs tailored to careers in sawmilling, logging or other forestry and forest products sector jobs. RISE is structured similarly to JWA, but currently does not include our sector. This language rectifies that situation and will provide needed workforce development assistance for the forest products value chain.
- **Wood Innovation Grants:** Reauthorizes the Wood Innovation (WIG) and Community Wood Grant programs. On WIG, the bill reduces the non-federal dollar for dollar matching requirement to 50%. It also updates priorities for grants to include the use or retrofitting of existing sawmill facilities, the enhancement of carbon reduction strategies, and resilience and economic benefits associated with wood products. On Community Wood, the measure changes the name of the program to the Community Wood Facilities Grant Program. It also increases the federal cost-share from 35% to 50% for projects, and the maximum grant per facility to $5 million. Finally, it increases the maximum size for energy systems eligible to 40 megawatts (current limit is 5 megawatts of nameplate capacity) and doubles its total authorization to $50 million.
- **Biomass Carbon Neutrality:** Includes a binding biomass carbon neutrality provision requiring the Department of Agriculture to assign a greenhouse gas emissions factor of no more than zero to any policy related to combustion of forest-based biomass for energy. This language differs from the existing carbon neutrality provision that is reauthorized every year as part of the appropriations process in that its language is legally binding—meaning that the Department must comply with the directive. The Hardwood Federation, working with other trade associations in the sector, hopes to expand upon this provision to include an "all of government" approach—not just USDA—to this important and legally binding carbon neutrality language.

- **Biofuel Payments:** Reauthorizes the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels through 2031. This direct payment program incentivizes wood pellet production as "advanced biofuel" is defined in the law to include wood pellets—both those used for the domestic heating market and export pellets. Producers simply report their tonnage to USDA on a quarterly basis and receive cash payments.
- **Forest Inventory and Analysis:** Updates the Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program to improve national forest data collection and requires—as a data collection method—a timber products output survey and woodland owner survey. The language requires USDA to annually report inventory and analysis of timber within our national forests. Finally, the bill establishes an expert "Blue Ribbon" panel to review FIA to evaluate its effectiveness and provide recommendations for improvement.

If these measures move, they will not be taken up individually and passed. Rather they would be offered as an amendment to other larger legislative vehicles like the Farm Bill or government funding legislation that may advance later this year. The Federation team is actively working in support of these bills and any amendment efforts that may materialize. Recall, Rep. Bentz offered the language embodied in his bill as an amendment during House floor consideration of the Farm Bill. That effort failed, but it was a close vote, and we are encouraged by our advocacy and messaging on this critical market development issue.

In terms of process, the current Farm Bill expires September 30. If the Senate does not move its measure before the August recess, it is likely that an extension of current law will be pursued. The Federation team is on the scene and working with our Congressional champions. We are hopeful that Congress will find a way to advance a Farm Bill reauthorization measure to the President's desk by year's end.

Renewable Fuel Standard Reintroduced

The Wildfire Reduction Market Expansion Act was introduced in the House and Senate, which includes language to expand the definition of "renewable biomass" in the existing statute authorizing the Renewable Fuel Standard to include forest-based biomass.

House lead sponsors are Representatives Cliff Bentz (R-OR-02) and Bennie Thompson (D-MS-02) with Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04), James Gallagher (R-CA-01), Mike Ezell (R-MS-04), Ami Bera (D-CA-06), Derrick Van Orden (R-WI-03), Max Miller (R-OH-07), Kim Schrier (D-WA-08), and Bob Latta (R-OH-05) as additional original cosponsors. Senate lead sponsors are Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) with Alex Padilla (D-CA), John Kennedy (R-LA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Angus King (I-ME) as additional original cosponsors.

More information is available in the joint **Senate and House press release**. The Hardwood Federation will continue to support passage of this important effort to provide additional markets for hardwood residuals.

Congress Supports Hardwood Federation Comments on Chinese Lumber Purchase Commitments

Thirty-one members of Congress **signed a letter** to U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer expressing support for comments submitted by the Hardwood Federation communicating the importance of including US hardwood lumber in upcoming discussions with China.

The Hardwood Federation worked with Congressional offices to draft the letter and secure signatures. Decreasing exports of lumber have severely impacted U.S. mill production and capacity, demonstrating the vital need for the U.S. government to pressure China for purchase commitments.

The Congressional letter was covered in **several media outlets**, including *Inside Trade*, which is widely read by key D.C. policy makers, as well as several publications serving the wood products sector.

HARDWOOD FEDERATION

Follow the Hardwood Federation on LinkedIn

The Hardwood Federation is on **LinkedIn**! Check out the Federation's posts, including updates on their efforts and activities in D.C., press coverage, and hardwood industry related federal policy news and action!

AHEC Update: Ban on Oak to Turkey

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) recently learned and shared news of a ban on red and white oak products, including kiln-dried lumber, to Turkey (the Republic of Türkiye).

This ban came into force on August 4, and affects all suppliers of oak, not just from the U.S. Details are scarce at this time, but the ban seems to be a result of a new classification for pest areas, and may be a technical issue rather than a policy change.

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service contacts and local industry are working with Turkish officials in Ankara to get this issue resolved as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, it will not be possible to ship oak to Turkey until there is a way to comply with the new regulation. AHEC will share more updates as they become available.

AMERICAN HARDWOOD EXPORT COUNCIL

Make a Real Impact

The two graphs on the right visually represent the state of the domestic hardwood industry—both past and present. The path to regain market share and change the trajectory of these graphs in the years ahead is built through promotion, education, and project inspiration. One way your company can help promote Real American Hardwood® products—and our industry—is to be more active on social media and engage with the Real American Hardwood Coalition.

Like, comment, share, follow, and subscribe! And be sure to use #RealAmericanHardwood when posting across your social media platforms.

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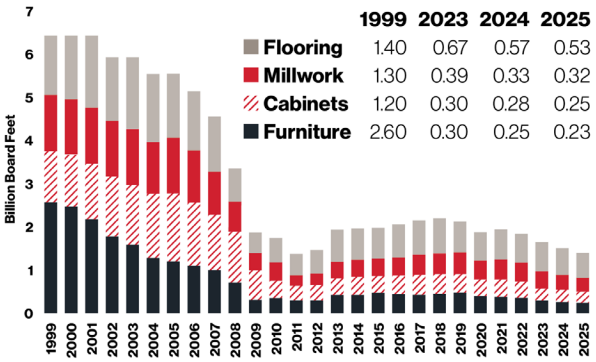
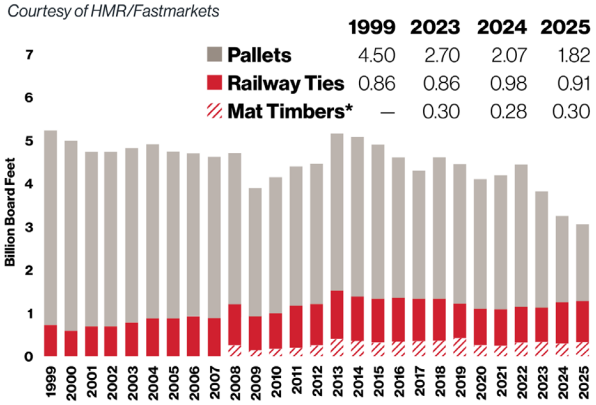
US Consumption of Hardwood Grade Lumber by Sector

Courtesy of HMR/Fastmarkets



US Consumption of Hardwood Industrial Lumber by Sector

Courtesy of HMR/Fastmarkets



*Mat Timbers data not available before 2008

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The Link is published each month exclusively for members of the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the HMA; HMA staff welcomes comments and questions.

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