



Empire State Forest Products Association

Our Views

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Advocacy regarding public policy which may affect New York's Forests, forest products industry and forest landowners is the primary goal of the Empire State Forest Products Association (ESFPA). As a member driven trade association, we are responsible and accountable to our 350+ member businesses and individuals. Documenting our accomplishments on those matters important to our members is something your Board and staff take seriously, and we take great pride in sharing with membership.

The following documents the accomplishments of ESFPA during the 2025 portion of the New York State biennial Legislative Session which runs through December 2026. We report this in the same way we present "*Our Views*" in our biennial publication which guides us in our work with the New York State Legislature, government agencies and our Congressional delegation.

ESFPA is the voice of the forest products industry in Albany and beyond, representing "*the people behind New York's healthy forests and quality wood products.*"

Agriculture/Silviculture

1. Supported and secured funding of the **Wood Products Development Council** under the Environmental Protection Fund at \$20,000 which was included in the enacted SFY 2025-26 Budget. Note decrease due to \$1.2 million accumulated surplus.
2. Opposed legislation A. 1252 (Glick)/S. 4710 (Fahy) relating to reduction of acreage for **Clear Cuts within the Adirondack Park** and cumulative impact assessments of Working Forest Conservation Easement.
3. Opposed legislation A. 8673 (Glick)/S. 7203 (Krueger) known as the **Tropical Rainforest Economic & Environmental Stability Act** (TREES Act) requiring companies contracting with New York State to ensure that they do not contribute to tropical forest degradation or deforestation. Lead a broad trade coalition of opposition to the legislation as well.
4. Commented on funding eligibility guidelines for **Restoring & Expanding Forests through Reforestation and Afforestation Practices** under the 2022 Biand Act.
5. Supported the American Forest Foundation's **Rural Forest Markets Act** (RFMA) establishing a funding mechanism for the sale of carbon credits from Family Forests.

Climate Change

1. Engaged with Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and NYS Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) on the stakeholder groups working on the economy-wide **New York Cap & Invest** (NYCI) program and regulatory framework.
2. Commented on DEC draft **Environmental Justice Siting Law Amendments to the State Environmental Quality Review Act Regulations** for the issuance of permits affecting disadvantaged communities.

3. Executive Director John Bartow has been serving as a Sector Advisor to the second **NYS Climate Assessment**. The Climate Assessment is focused on climate adaptation and mitigation as opposed to emission reductions which is the primary focus of the CLCPA and Scoping Plan.
4. Served on the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) **Air Task Group** which is influential in shaping NAFOs climate policies.
5. Worked with the American Forest Foundation **Family Forest Carbon Program** aimed at smaller forest landowners and carbon benefits.

Economic Development

1. ESFPA continues to have a seat on the **Adirondack North Country Association** Board of Directors. Executive Director John Bartow was elected to a term as Capital Regional VP for the Board.
2. Supported efforts at both the State and federal level to increase investment tax credits for capital investments in the forest products industry and making such credits equitable across industry sectors.
3. Worked with SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry on the **Climate and Applied Research Institute** (CAFRI) for Carbon Assessment on Forest Land. Helped secure an increase in EPF funding for CAFRI to \$1.5 million in the 2025-26 Budget.
4. Worked with SUNY College of Environmental College and Forestry on standing up the **Bioeconomy Development Institute** (BDI).
5. Supported the work of the **Real American Hardwood Campaign** aimed at demonstrating the benefits of hardwood in buildings and infrastructure.

Education/Workforce Investment

1. ESFPA continued discussions and support of workforce related efforts at SUNY ESF and Cornell CALS.
2. ESFF continues to host and support **Project Learning Tree** (PLT) and work with the NY SFI SIC on targeted efforts at attracting youth to careers in the forest and wood products sector.
3. Worked with the Wood Products Development Council on efforts to try and implement **ForestryWorks®** in New York.

Energy

Carbon

1. Supported Federal budget language enacted into law in the FFY 2025 budget recognizing biomass as “carbon neutral”. 2025 was the seventh year of temporary budget language while we work toward a permanent definition of **biomass carbon neutrality** by EPA.
2. Worked with NAFO and other national affiliates on several climate initiatives including climate priorities for the Forest **Climate Working Group** and the NAFO CEO Policy Principles. Both efforts lay out priorities and policy principles that call for rewarding the carbon benefits of wood building products, funding for forest carbon science and data collection, and incentives for working forests that sequester carbon.

Biomass

1. Supported legislation A. 472-A (Woerner)/S. 1343-A (Parker) which establishes the **NYS Clean Fuel Standard** (Passed Senate), a technology neutral program to support clean energy fuels in the transportation sector, including biofuels. The Clean Fuels Standard was included in the Climate Scoping Plan.
2. Supported legislation A. 7308-A (/S. 4065-C (Parker) establishing a sustainable aviation fuel tax credit that will incentive the development of **sustainable aviation fuels** in New York and significantly reduce the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) contribution of aviation fuels. Feedstocks include sustainably derived agricultural and forest feedstocks and residuals.

3. Supported legislation S. 729 (Gallivan) providing a ***tax credit for densified biomass fuel*** expenditures.
4. Supported State and federal legislation which recognizes ***biomass as a renewable energy resource*** and providing carbon benefits.
5. Supported efforts in New York and the Northern Forest Region in education, outreach, and marketing of the ***benefits of biomass energy alternatives*** and the economic benefits of locally derived fuel.
6. Continue to partner with the Northern Forest Center on the Modern ***Wood Heat Program*** to market and promote the use of densified wood pellet heating systems in residential, commercial, and institutional buildings.

Energy Costs

1. Provided testimony and correspondence on the ***costs of energy and to rate payers*** on implementation of the CLCPA.
2. Provided stakeholder input and comments on the proposed ***New York Cap & Invest*** program and regulations.

Renewable Energy

1. Worked with NYSEDA on the ***New York Solar Energy Score Card*** for siting renewable energy facilities on forest lands.
2. Opposed S. 4408 (May) which would authorize the ***lease of State Reforestation Lands for renewable energy development***.

Environment

Environmental Regulation

1. Opposed legislation A. 6930 (Burdick)/S. 5938 (Harckham) which would authorize certain ***municipalities with local wetland laws to regulate pesticide applications in wetlands***. This bill has been vetoed by Governor Hochul three years running and is a high risk of undermining DEC's exclusive jurisdiction over the regulation of pesticides in New York. ***Veto No. 92***.
2. Supported regulatory efforts of DEC to ***streamline the Forest Tax Law (RPTL section 480-A)***.
3. Supported continued record funding in enacted SFY 2025-26 Budget for the Environmental Protection Fund. ***\$425 million included in SFY 2025-26 enacted Budget***. Secured line items for the Wood Products Development Council (\$20,000), Regenerate NY (\$500,000), Community Forests (\$500,000), Hemlock Wholly Adelgid (\$500,000), Easements for Land Trusts (\$1.5 million) and CAFRI (\$1.5 million).
4. ESFPA continues to collaborate with AF&PA, Sylvamo and Finch on the ***Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR)*** known as the "Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act", A. 1749 (Glick)/ S. 1464 (Harckham). ESFPA continues to be successful in keeping this legislation limited to packaging paper. A National coalition has worked on an alternative bill known as the "Affordable Waste reduction Act" a. 6191 (Jackson)/S. 5062 (Martinez) for which ESFPA has successfully obtained mill exclusion language for our two virgin papermills. The coalition continues to advocate collectively and will do so in 2026.
5. Supported legislation A. 6466 (Septime)/S. 1704 (Harckham) which amended the ECL regarding ***Painting of Petroleum Bulk Storage Tanks*** which fixed a ridiculous requirement to paint all petroleum bulk storage tanks white or beige imposing huge costs on manufacturers ***Chapter 499, Laws of 2025***.

Endangered Species

1. Supported efforts by the DEC to ***streamline standards and regulations (6 NYCRR Part 182)*** for the protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species and aligning state standards with federal standards.

2. Helped DEC in drafting **Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB)** guidance following the USF&W Service designation of NLEB as Threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Invasive Species and Forest Pests

1. ESFPA remains a member of the ***Invasive Species Advisory Council***.
2. Worked with DEC and DAM on information regarding ***Spotted Lantern Fly, Hemlock Wholly Adelgid and Oak Wilt*** disease.
3. Opposed A.
4. Opposed a variety of bills which would limit the sale, use or distribution of pesticides and herbicides such as neonicotinoids and glyphosate.
5. Continued to oppose guidance and regulations designed under “Tree SMART Trade” which would unduly regulate solid wood pallets and packaging while supporting those recommendations which could have a positive impact on the importation of new forest pests.

Open Space Conservation

1. Provided comments on the Bond Act to make ***eligible expenses for flood mitigation, climate resilience and recreation on Working Forest Conservation Easement lands***.
2. Provided comments on guidance for the **30 by 30 Report** being developed by DEC on conserving 30% of the State’s land and water area by 2030.

Water Quality/Wetlands/Streams

1. Commented on and supported the final promulgation of ***DEC Freshwater Wetland Regulations providing for a Silvicultural Exemption*** for the selective harvesting of timber. These regulations were part of a major expansion of DEC’s freshwater wetland regulatory program amended in legislation enacted in 2022. A huge win for forestry and silviculture.
2. Commented on and supported the fourth renewal of DEC’s ***General Permit for Temporary Culvert and Bridge Stream Crossings***. This general permit protects long standing forestry exemptions and reflects the wetland exemption codified in 2022.
3. Opposed A. 5832-B (Kelles)/S. 4574-B (May); Passed Senate, which would require existing and new water discharges to monitor and report PFAS discharges including general permits for multi-purpose stormwater permits.
4. Supported increases in the Environmental Protection Fund and Bond Act aimed at ***watershed protection funding*** including the acquisition of easements or in fee which would also allow forest management.

Forest Markets

1. Conducted the ***2025 Fall Forestry Roundtable*** which included a successful panel on Mass Timber.
2. Supported legislation A. 9255 (Barrett) known as ***“Facilitating Resilient Affordable Mass Timber Expansion Act”*** coming out of the Fall Forestry Roundtable.
3. Worked with the Hardwood Federation and other national trade associations on advancing the ***Real American Hardwood Campaign***.
4. Supported the ***Wood Products Development Council*** efforts aimed at increasing the use of wood products from forests for green building (including green schools). Working with Ag. & Markets on reappointments to the WPDC.
5. Working with NYS DEC and Ag. & Markets on climate related proposals related to the use of ***wood as a substitute for more carbon intensive products*** such as concrete and steel.

Labor/Human Resources

1. Working with a broad spectrum of businesses organizations representing all sectors of the New York State economy and secured a Governor's Veto (**Veto Memo 87**) to A.6063 (Lunsford)/S. 4423 (Hoylman-Segal), which would have radically expanded the types of damages awarded in **Wrongful Death Lawsuits**.
2. Worked with the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) on holding off legislation A. 84 (Solages)/S. 172 (Ramos) allowing **a 600% increase in Short-Term Disability Benefits** to New York worker claims. Passed Senate.
3. ESFPA successfully worked with the Business Council of NY and several other trade associations on budget securing a **\$7 billion budget appropriation to pay off federal loans encumbered in the COVID epidemic to help businesses recover from high unemployment premium adjustments** as a result of massive UI claims in 2020 and 2021.

Manufacturing

1. Supported work of the Industry Advisory Panel of the Climate Action Council calling for attention to **Energy Intensive and Trade Exposed (EITE) industries**. This is a priority of ESFPA and the Business Council of New York and a major piece of the final enacted CLCPA. This is also a key provision relating to the draft Cap & Invest program and rulemaking.

Taxation

Real Property Taxes

1. Supported DEC's administrative efforts to **reform Real Property Tax Law on forest lands** (RPTL 480-a) aimed at streamlining regulatory requirements. These administrative regulatory changes were drafted in 2020 but have not yet been released. Legislative changes to 480A are included in the final Climate Scoping Plan.
2. Supported favorable tax incentives at both the State and federal level which recognize the long-term benefits of working forest conservation easements.

Income/Franchise/Estate Taxes

1. Supported adjustments to both **federal and State estate tax limits**.
2. Worked with the Business Council of New York State and others on pushing against attempts by the New York State Legislature to raise **Corporate and Personal income Taxes**.

Tax Credits

1. Supported legislation A. 161 (Woerner)/S. 31 (Stec) that would establish a forestry stewardship and habitat conservation credit (personal income tax credit) for landowners who invested in forest and habitat conservation practices.
2. Support equitable tax credits for all business research and development and investment tax credits that are equitable across business sectors.
3. Supporting recommendations to the Climate Action Council for forest carbon tax credits.

Transportation

1. ESFPA worked with NYS Trucking Association and others in successfully getting a two-year delay to implementation of the **Advanced Clean Truck Rule** holding off mandates on heavy duty electric truck sale mandates.
2. Supported legislation A. 472-A, (Woerner)/S. 1434-A (Parker) supporting a **Clean Fuel Standard** for electrification and alternative fuels for transportation decarbonization.