



ASSOCIATION OF FOREST INDUSTRIES, INC.

P.O. Box 501
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SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 1140

VOLUNTARY FIREWOOD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM -- ESTABLISHMENT

March 1, 2022

The Maryland Forests Association and the Association of Forest Industries – Maryland’s two leading voices for the forest products industry, inclusive of landowners, sawmills, loggers, consultants, and primary/secondary manufacturers – support House Bill 1140.

Early last year, USDA ceased certifying that commercial dry kiln operations for firewood were adequate to control the spread of Emerald Ash Borers (EAB). This pest has spread throughout the Northeast and efforts to mitigate its spread have largely proven ineffective. Consequently, USDA is turning most control measures, including the certification of firewood dry kilns, over to the states. Currently, Maryland has no such program and no statutory authority to create one. The lack of such a program will be an instant barrier to those who might want to enter the commercial firewood market and will drastically limit shipments of firewood to important market areas for existing producers.

For now, USDA continues to certify firewood dry kiln operations as sufficient to control gypsy moths in gypsy moth quarantine areas which includes Maryland. That provides some ability to continue out of state shipments, but USDA is indicating that they may soon discontinue this service as well. In addition, spotted lantern fly has been found in Maryland and surrounding states will almost certainly require adequate control measures before wood products can be shipped from areas with this serious pest. Kilns used to dry lumber or heat treat pallets are already certified by private organizations or federal agencies as adequate for pest control. Commercial firewood operations remain vulnerable, however. HB 1140 will correct this by authorizing the Maryland DNR to initiate a small but effective effort to monitor firewood dry kiln operations and certify that they meet individual state and federal requirements for pest control, including spotted lantern fly. This will assure continued operation of existing firms and pave the way for new entries into the commercial firewood marketplace.

The program authorized by HB 1140 is voluntary, applying only to those operators with commercial firewood dry kilns who would like state certification. Smaller operators without kilns will continue to use other “best practices” to control pests and they also typically do not ship outside the state. They will be unaffected, as will lumber mills and pallet operations with dry kilns that produce other wood products.

In the final analysis, support of House Bill 1140 is support for a rural resource-based industry and its measurable jobs/taxes, thus benefiting Maryland’s State and local economy.

Respectfully,

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