

NCFA SUPPORTS HOUSE BILL 628



The North Carolina Forestry Association **STRONGLY SUPPORTS House Bill 628, Protect/Promote NC Lumber.** The bill correctly identifies the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard as a discriminatory construction standard that refuses to recognize other certified systems such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) that are currently used by North Carolina landowners and manufacturers. As a result, the LEED standard discourages the use of North Carolina grown and manufactured products since less than one percent of the forests in North Carolina are under the LEED certification system, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

“Our forests here in North Carolina are grown, harvested and manufactured under the most stringent environmental standards in the world, yet the LEED certification system, due to its archaic and agenda driven requirements, fails to promote locally grown products,” stated NCFA Executive Vice President Bob Schaefer. *“This legislation would put North Carolina’s wood products on an equal playing field.”*

The forest products industry continues to be North Carolina’s top manufacturing industry, providing over 67,000 jobs across the state. There are over 2,000 forest products facilities, many of which are small, family-owned and operated companies, with a presence in every county in North Carolina.

# of manufacturing facilities	2,299
# of manufacturing employees	67,613
Contribution to NC Gross Product, \$ billion	4.5
Wages, \$ billion	2.7
Value of shipments, \$ billion	15.3
Economic benefits, \$ billion	23.8
Economic benefit, Number of Jobs	178,498

Not included in this data, but equally important, are the contributions that our forests make to the state’s environment and to other industries such as tourism. **North Carolina boasts 18.6 million acres of forestland, roughly 60% of the state. In terms of ownership, 85% of the state’s forests are privately owned.** Two-thirds of that ownership is comprised of non-industrial private forestland owners (NIPF).

The strength of the forest products industry is one of the main reasons why we have so much forestland in our state today. Since colonial times, landowners have always had healthy markets for the trees that they are growing. Forest landowners invest growing trees not only to enjoy them for recreation and aesthetics, but also to earn a return at some point. Working forests and working farms are the keys to conserving green space without adversely impacting rural economies. The forest products industry provides the critical incentive for these landowners.

“I grow my pines and hardwoods for various reasons, but at some point in the future, my trees will be harvested for a profit to justify my initial investment and continued land use of my property,” explains Bob Cooper, a forest landowner from the Winston-Salem area who was the American Tree Farm System’s National Tree Farmer of the Year in 2008. *“We are confident they will provide income and years of enjoyment for our families.”*

For more information on this issue, please contact Bob Schaefer, the NCFA’s Executive Vice President at bschaefer@ncforestry.org or at (919) 980-1500 or Chris Brown, the NCFA’s Director of Communications at (919) 337-6094 or cbrown@ncforestry.org. The NCFA’s website is www.ncforestry.org.

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