[letterhead]

April 20, 2017  
  
  
Senator Lisa Baker

Senate Box 203020

Harrisburg, PA 17120-3020

Dear Senator Baker:

As a member of the Northern Tier Hardwood Association, I am writing you to express our concern about Governor Wolf’s elimination of the funding for Pennsylvania’s Hardwoods Research and Promotion in the proposed 2017-2018 budget. We urge you to support continued investment in PA’s Hardwoods Research and Promotion, which primarily funds the Northern Tier Hardwood Association (NTHA) through a grant from the Hardwood Development Council. Over the last twenty years, the Northern Tier Hardwood Association has been dedicated to furthering the forest products industry and sustainable forestry throughout the nine-county region in the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Wayne, Pike, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Susquehanna, Bradford, Sullivan, Wyoming, and Tioga counties.

The forest product industry has historically remained one of the region’s stable and leading sources of employment and is essential to the local rural economy. It is NTHA’s mission to promote long term economic development in the Northern Tier of PA through intelligent forest management, careful expansion of secondary wood processing, improved manufacturing methods, regional hardwood promotion, and education.

Renewed and continued grant support from the Pennsylvania Hardwood Development Council (HDC) will have a direct, substantial impact on the viability of the Northern Tier Hardwood Association and it’s 284 members, as well as the success of the region’s forest based enterprises and the entire regional economy.

Without such funding, NTHA will not be able to provide opportunities for the membership and the public to train locally and grow professionally through continuing education. There is a significant need for local, regional training and that demand continues to grow every year. Hundreds of people are trained each year at classes and workshops hosted by the NTHA. NTHA provides important classes such as Game of Logging chainsaw safety training, Advanced Logger Rescue for loggers, foresters, and Fire/EMS personnel, CPR/First Aid, hardwood log bucking, wood energy workshops, and several forest landowner workshops. Without your support, none of this will be possible.

Furthermore, lack of support for this important line item could seriously impact the 2,100 forest industry businesses that employ 60,000 workers statewide. This important sector relies on a small appropriation of $385,000 to produce $11.5 billion in sales annually with a total economic impact of $19 billion.

Lastly, NTHA’s mission is directly related to the recommendations provided by the “Green Ribbon Task Force on Forest Products, Conservation and Jobs” last year. Currently, none of those important recommendations have made it into the budget. Not only can the Northern Tier Hardwood Association be an asset to accomplishing the task force’s goals and recommendations, but it would be a disservice and contradiction to the Green Ribbon Task Force on *Forest Products*, *Conservation*, and *Jobs* to cut the funding for Hardwoods Research and Promotion in Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

[Your name and contact information]