



FRA 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

MISSION: Forest Resources Association will proactively lead a world-class wood supply chain.

We Will: Provide an effective member voice in Washington, DC:

- Defend against threatening legislation and regulation
- Advance public policies that support industry sustainability

Communicate relevant and timely information to create opportunities for company and employee success:

- Promote safety
- Improve skills
- Elevate technical and operational expertise
- Identify workforce issues and define proactive solutions
- Establish leadership development programs

Maintain a thriving regional structure:

- Address regional policy and operational issues
- Identify regional research priorities
- Build and grow a strong grassroots advocacy network

FRA supports your ongoing commitment to Environmental Performance and Socially Responsible Governance through employee development and training, safety awareness and accident prevention, policy development and government interaction, and education about the sustainability of well-managed forests and the role of forests in mitigating climate change.

FRA National Committee Goals

Public Policy / Advocacy Committee Goals:

Provide an effective member voice in Washington, DC. Successfully influence public policy to defend and enhance the wood supply chain's operating environment and sustainability.

Supplier / Consumer Relations Committee Goals:

Promote the development of a competitive framework within which members may implement supply chain efficiency improvements, identify workforce issues, and define proactive solutions throughout the supply chain.

Operations Committee Goals:

Share/promote technical best practices, promote safety, improve skills and elevate technical and operational expertise, and encourage process improvements, operational excellence, promote industry development and technology transfer.

FRA 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

NATIONAL PUBLIC POLICY/ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Public Policy / Advocacy Committee Goals: Provide an effective member voice in Washington, DC. Successfully influence public policy to defend and enhance the wood supply chain's operating environment and sustainability.

Workforce

The sustainability and competitive viability of the forest products industry relies on an intact, healthy wood supply chain, including labor. Demographics indicate that access to labor will become more difficult across all sectors, especially in rural areas dependent on agriculture, mining, and forestry.

Access to Labor

Support legislation or regulations that promote workforce education and recruitment in forest-based economies.

Jobs in the Woods Act

Continue to advance the bicameral bipartisan legislation, the Jobs in the Woods Act, for inclusion in the Farm Bill.

Defend Independent Contractor Status

Preserve the "safe harbor" establishing independent contractor status under IRS jurisdiction and oppose DOL attempts to encumber Wage & Hour status determinations.

- Monitor implementation and enforcement of the Independent Contractor Rule and implications it may have on the wood supply chain.
- Continued leadership role in Coalition of Independent Entrepreneurs.
- Oppose regulatory or legislative proposals to place further burdens on DOL determinations of independence.

H-2B Guestworker Visas

Improve forest-related services' access to foreign, non-immigrant workers and improve practicality and economic feasibility.

- Lead H-2B Workforce Coalition's forestry-related management activities.
- Oppose or support the Department of Labor or other agency initiatives that propose changes to the H-2B visa program.
- Advocate for the enactment of legislative language that directs the Departments of Labor and Homeland Security authorization to release supplemental H-2B visas.
- Seek meaningful and permanent H-2B cap relief through legislation.

FRA 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Transportation and Truck Weight Reform

Support efforts to improve the safe and efficient movement of raw forest products from the woods to the mill.

- Inform members of Congress on the safety and efficiency benefits of allowing log trucks access to interstates at legal state vehicle weights and configurations.
- Advance the provisions of the Safe Routes Act.
- Support research that advances FRA's transportation positions.
- Monitor and comment on rulemaking that may affect the wood supply chain.

Defend the Concept of Biomass Carbon Neutrality in Federal Policy

- Defend FRA-supported legislation and work to fully enact administrative rules directing EPA, USDA, and DOE to recognize the carbon-neutral nature of forest-based biomass fuels from attack by anti-forestry groups.
- Ensure federal carbon-management incentives and mandates affecting forest resources maintain the inclusion of scientifically substantiated carbon neutrality and avoid imposing impractical and prohibitive accounting procedures.
- Pursue binding provisions in upcoming Farm Bill provisions to ensure that federal policy recognizes carbon neutrality of forest-based biomass energy.

Advance Endangered Species Act (ESA) Reform

Continue to engage Congress and the judicial branch on ESA listings that threaten to impede the practice of sustainable forestry.

- Monitor and provide comments on proposed species listings and work with our allies to ensure the most recent research is used in the determination of a species' ESA status.
- Continue to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and public land managers to develop reasonable conservation strategies and Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) for bat species listed as endangered under the ESA.
- Work with members of Congress to prepare and introduce legislation to reform the Endangered Species Act providing more flexibility to the USFWS with landowners when they are not the primary cause for a species listed as endangered under the ESA.

Farm Bill

Work with Agricultural Committee leadership and committee members to include provisions in the Farm Bill that benefit FRA membership.

- Work to include priorities of the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition into the Farm Bill.
- Establish a forestry workforce program that provides grants to forestry workforce training programs, such as the Jobs in the Woods Act

FRA 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Improve Small Business Access to Credit

Support public policy initiatives, such as credit union reform, that show promise of enhancing competitive options for small forestry-related businesses in need of credit.

- Build strategic alliances with allied associations and businesses.
- Assemble and promote recommendations for small forestry-related businesses to improve their credit profiles (Operations Committee).

Increase Use of Wood Building Products in Tall Buildings

- Improved technologies in the development of cross-laminated timber have the potential to provide expanded markets for the solid wood product sector. FRA will support legislation and monitor policies and regulations that provide a pathway for market growth in this area.

Climate Change Legislation

- Monitor climate change legislation and outline potential impacts on the wood supply chain.
- Promote active forest management as a solution to mitigate changing climate.

Federal Land Management

- Monitor and comment on federal land management policies or rulemaking that may impact timber supply from federal forestlands.

FRA 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

NATIONAL SUPPLIER/CONSUMER RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Supplier / Consumer Relations Committee Goals: Promote the development of a competitive framework within which members may implement supply chain efficiency improvements and identify workforce issues and define proactive solutions throughout the supply chain.

Relieve Logging, Trucking, and Mill Workforce Shortage

Identify, foster, and promote means to increase available logging, forest products trucking, and manufacturing workforce:

- Through alliances with organizations with access to likely entry-level workers.
- By publicizing logging, trucking, and mill career opportunities to broad sectors of the public.
- By connecting with organizations that help veterans and separating military personnel transition to the civilian workforce, and find opportunities to promote career opportunities in the forest industry.
- By supporting legislative initiatives to lower the legal age for entry-level logging and trucking workers, under suitable conditions (Public Policy / Advocacy Committee).
- By building and encouraging the development of relevant training resources.
- By finding ways to access and recruit immigrant, refugee and other non-traditional communities, which may bring previously unexplored opportunities to our industry.

Raise Awareness of Current and Emerging Demand Trends

Create opportunities for market observers to report on the wood and forest biomass market and demand trends.

- Summarize and link to published articles in relevant communication channels.
- Invite analysis of emerging demand trends and technical responses in utilization and merchandising in FRA meetings and Technical Releases.

Promote New Options for Improving the Quality of Communications among Supply Chain Members (Including Use of New Technologies)

- Identify techniques and technologies, emerging and in use, for improving communication.
- Identify and publish reviews of tested systems as FRA Technical Releases.
- Identify opportunities for field demonstrations at regional FRA meeting field trips.
- Stage forums at FRA meetings for discussion of emerging communications techniques or technologies.
- EUDR has the potential to stress existing relationships between suppliers and consumers. Look for ways to comply with this and other regulations in a fair and equitable manner that strengthens the entire supply chain.

Facilitate Interactive Workshops Between Mill and Supplier Personnel

Promote the availability of FRA's Consumer-Supplier Relationships Workshop

- Make workshops available to members on an as-requested basis.

FRA 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

NATIONAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Operations Committee Goals: Share/promote technical best practices, promote safety, improve skills and elevate technical and operational expertise, and encourage process improvements, operational excellence, promote industry development and technology transfer.

Forest Products Market Support and Promotion

Emphasize collaboration with strategic partners to assist economic development officials on recruiting industry investment and promoting new markets for forest products.

- Promote the overall economic contributions of the forest products industry and affiliated value chain.
- Document the socioeconomic impacts of recent mill closures on local and regional economies, including all supply chain stakeholders.
- Continue to promote the importance of carbon neutrality language for forest-based biomass.
- Collaborate with other like-minded associations to seek creative solutions to address lost capacity and attract new industry investment.
- Explore solutions to better predict supply imbalances and identify market opportunities for mill residuals or by-products.

Address Industry-wide Safety and Insurance Challenges

Identify and promote efforts to meet the current log trucking challenges of high insurance costs and declining insurance availability, a shortage of qualified, insurable drivers, and log trucking safety and loss control issues.

- Include trucking safety and insurance-related presentations at FRA regional and national meetings to share successes and possible solutions, including risk transfer and reduced exposure/liability opportunities.
- Increased emphasis on supporting and promoting TEAM Safe Trucking to develop and implement nationwide truck driver safety training and continuing education.
- Collaborate with stakeholders (TEAM Safe Trucking, Community Colleges, etc.) to address insurability challenges for inexperienced forest product drivers by substituting the two or 3-year experience requirement with an approved training curriculum.
- Publish trucking safety-related FRA Technical Releases and Safety Alerts.
- Coordinate with other organizations (logging associations, state implementation committees, etc.) to promote disseminating trucking safety training throughout the trucking workforce.
- Monitor tort reform efforts.

Promote Forest Products Industry Innovations

Monitor and share innovations within the forest products industry to improve safety and efficiency for all wood supply system stakeholders.

- Investigate the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) training platforms for safety and efficiency advancements.
- Emphasize the inclusion of AI topics and speakers (or similar technological advancements) at meetings, webinars, and FRA publications.

FRA 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Improve Trucking Efficiency

Identify and promote effective systems for optimizing trucking assets and wood transport costs.

- Encourage members to identify and notify FRA staff about systems to increase trucking efficiency.
- Educate members on innovations through publications, webinars, and at regional and national meetings.
- Provide a forum for both loggers and truck manufacturers to share knowledge of local innovations and barriers to trucking improvement across regions.

Minimize Mill and In-Woods Truck Turnaround Times and Streamline Woodyard Processes

Identify best practices in reducing truck turnaround both at the woodyard and at the landing.

- Explore the use of telematic data and geofencing around consuming mills to track turnaround times to best document the impacts and effects on supply chain costs.
- Identify innovations and educate members through FRA publications, webinars, and meetings.

Address Emerging Forest and Supply-Chain Security Issues

Inform members of emerging supply-chain and woodland security exposures and of best practices in loss prevention and assisting law enforcement.

- Maintain regional Security Group meetings as forums for networking and information sharing on best practices.
- Communicate Security Group recommendations to the membership at large through reports to the Operations Committee, appropriate Regional Policy Committees, and through Security Alerts.
- Provide continued cybersecurity guidance to members through webinars, Woods to Mill articles, and other methods of outreach and correspondence.

Enable Improved Fuel Efficiency and Reduced Consumable Spending

Identify and promote technical innovations and management systems that effectively conserve fuel and other consumables or reduce their per-unit cost in wood supply chain management.

- Identify best practices in fuel conservation and cost control and promote them through publications and meeting presentations.
- Publish evaluations of distribution systems such as the Southern Loggers Cooperative in controlling per-unit fuel costs.
- Continue to monitor the impacts of electric trucking fleets and other carbon reduction initiatives on the forest products supply chain.