

***Quick Updates*** ***from*** ***Your HF Team***

***Partial Federal Shutdown Looms as Compromise Budget Measures Remain Elusive***

The Hardwood Federation team attended a number of events for Members of Congress this week where the topic of a looming federal government shutdown inevitably was raised. At this time, most are in agreement that a shutdown of some duration is likely. We are hearing that a two-week shutdown beginning October 1 is the likeliest scenario, but the situation is fluid. House leadership, working with members of the Freedom Caucus and Problem Solvers Caucus, have fashioned a one month Continuing Resolution that would fund the government roughly through October, but a consensus on that plan has not been forged. We will keep you apprised of developments.

***USDA to Boost Export Promotion***

USDA has agreed to use Commodity Credit Corporation funds to spend nearly $1.4 billion on a program to help farm groups market their commodities overseas. The market promotion funding would establish a Regional Agricultural Trade Promotion program that would be similar to an effort launched by the Trump administration during the trade war with China.  Funds are separate from funding provided through the Farm Bill.  At this time, it is unclear how these monies will be allocated.  Under ATP, organizations applied for funding for specific projects; administration and staff salaries were not covered, but this may not be the case with the new program.  Congress has two weeks, until Sept 30, to review USDA’s proposal, at which point an official announcement will be made, although the announcement could come sooner. The Hardwood Federation will closely monitor this development to ensure that the American Hardwood Export Council will be eligible for these funds.

***EPA Prepares Grants for Low Carbon Construction Materials for FY 2024***

On September 14, EPA announced that it would be making grants available to parties to develop Environment Product Declarations (EPD’s) for low carbon construction materials, beginning after October 1 of this year.  Grants will be available to parties who have an active account on [Sam.gov](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vc2FtLmdvdi9mYWwvYWRhOGU2MGU2YWRiNGEwMWI5Y2YxMGVlZjU3MmZmNTAvdmlldyIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzA5MTUuODI2Nzk3NjEifQ.9TKLL8Wwyel19yZFxbAZG0m2on0aY5EPjJ31l-4QMNM/s/3040288807/br/226041069498-l) and are registered on [Grants.gov](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LmdyYW50cy5nb3YvIiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDIzMDkxNS44MjY3OTc2MSJ9.h9UgnVOdUJjF61gFQXlXy3WzrzwR496z8NmwjO4OrGM/s/3040288807/br/226041069498-l).  EPA’s announcement follows in the wake of comments submitted by the Federation in May arguing that any low-carbon construction materials program should take into account the carbon storage value of wood products.  The Federation will keep you posted on grant availability as soon as the agency formally opens the application process.