



THE CUTTING EDGE

WOOD MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS OF AMERICA

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We Haven't Given Up

John Satagaj, London & Satagaj

In recent columns, we have focused on WMMA's initiatives to restore business confidence in the economy and to stimulate purchases of the machinery you make, but WMMA is also pressing forward on other important items ranging from health care costs to product liability reform. The trial lawyers still have their friends in the United States Senate, but it does not mean we have given up on our efforts to secure a reasonable statute-of-repose for the machinery you make. A new year makes for new opportunities. In the President's State of the Union address he emphasized the need for job creation. Our current product liability system is a job eliminator.

Last year, Representative Steve Chabot (R-OH) reintroduced his bill, "The Workplace Goods Job Growth and Competitiveness Act," H.R. 940. Cosponsors of the bill include Representative Randy (Duke) Cunningham (R-CA), Representative George Gekas (R-PA), Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Representative Ken Lucas (D-KY), Representative John Shimkus (R-IL), and Representative Charles Stenholm (D-TX). Bills are automatically carried over between sessions of the same Congress so this bill remains our principal vehicle for change.

You may recall, in the House of Representatives, the 106th Congress approved a version of the bill on February 2, 2000. It passed by a vote of 222-194. The Senate did not consider the bill in light of ongoing objections by the White House. Unfortunately, while we have a new President in the White House, we have a different party in control of the Senate.

Under the bill, no civil action may be filed against the manufacturer or seller of a durable good for damage to property arising out of an accident involving that durable good if the accident occurred more than 18 years after the date on which the durable good was delivered to its first purchaser or lessee. Likewise, no civil action may be filed against the manufacturer or seller of a durable good for damages for death or personal injury arising out of an accident involving that durable good if the accident occurred more than 18 years after the date on which the durable good was delivered to its first purchaser or lessee, and if the claimant has received or is eligible to receive worker compensation; and the injury does not involve a toxic harm (including, but not limited to, any asbestos-related harm).

At this time there is no Senate companion bill. We are focusing our efforts in the House first. If we cannot get a bill out of committee and passed by an overwhelming majority in the House, we have no chance at all. If you have not contacted your Representative, this is a good time to do so. Write your Representative and urge him/her to co-sponsor this legislation. The more you can personalize the letter, the better. Relate the problem to your business, the jobs you provide, and to the community. As we have observed many times, this bill is critical to the survival of

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Note from the Executive Vice President

Kenneth R. Hutton

This month's issue of The Cutting Edge kicks off the fifth year of the feature "Did You Know...?" The feature article for January's issue was "2001: The Year in Review." As the title suggests, it highlighted the various accomplishments achieved during the Association's 102nd Year. WMMA members should feel proud of what the Association has done on their behalf.

The challenge for the Association to be the best it can be is never-ending, however. The effort is continuous: to challenge existing programs, to develop new services that meet the members' needs today and tomorrow, and to extinguish those programs whose times have past. The end result should add value for every member's dues dollar and enable WMMA to be the best it can be in serving the needs of the woodworking equipment, cutting tool, and supply industry.

The "Did You Know...?" series examines the current programs and services in more detail. It also offers a glimpse at what your Board and Committees envision over the next twelve months. Your Directors and Association staff have worked hard to build a variety of programs and services from which members can choose to best fit their individual needs. Only when the membership is fully informed about what is available can companies make intelligent, discerning selections; that is the goal of this continuing series.

Did You Know...

...that 15% of the 2001 WMMA total expenditures centered on Industry Marketing?

Key Committee projects included:

- Continued distribution worldwide of 11,000 copies of the 2001 Buyer's Guide & Directory in either a smaller pocketsize format or a CD-ROM.
- Publication of the fifth annual American Technology Guide, which was distributed during the 2001 Anaheim Show. For no charge, numerous WMMA members were showcased to a trade show audience in the thousands as well as to a trade press readership in the tens of thousands.
- Designed, produced and mailed a postcard promoting the Buyer's Guide and website.
- Forwarded to members numerous product leads gathered from end users utilizing the 1-800-BUY-WMMA hotline or finding the Association's website.
- Distribution of the latest installment of the "How to" Marketing Brochures.
- 25 Placements of the advertisement promoting "Stop with WMMA...Go with American Technology" in numerous trade press issues, developing another thought-provoking special section, and placing industry articles on more than 40 unique member stories whenever the opportunity arose.
- Orchestration of another Anaheim Show Press Tour, where 33 members took the opportunity to display new products to 17 representatives of the trade press during the final set-up day.
- Placement of the "Stop with WMMA...Go with American Technology" spotlight among the more than 130 WMMA exhibitors during the Anaheim Show '01.
- Designed and produced badge holder inserts promoting the spotlight theme for insertion into every visitor's badge at the Anaheim Show. The badge holder insert concept was also carried over to the TSI sponsored tradeshow, starting in Grand Rapids.
- Continued development in areas of technological opportunity, such as digital document conversion, to assist members better operate their businesses and efficiently process information.
- The Committee finished work on designing a new Association logo and made a series of recommendations to the Board of Directors.

For 2002, the Industry Marketing Committee plans on integrating an overall marketing theme, perhaps centered on an "American pride" concept, to tie together all of the aspects of the marketing campaign. Such programs as 1-800-BUY-WMMA, industry articles, "How to..." brochures, and advertisements will continue. The Committee will also look to develop another unique presence during IWF.



WIC Early Bird Deadline is March 15! Don't Delay - Register Now and Save!

If you register by March 15, 2002, not only will you save \$100 per person on your registration fees and \$75 on your contact table fee, you will be included in the printed program. Also, you must make your hotel reservations with the Westin La Cantera by March 15 in order to take advantage of the WIC discounted room rate. Call (210) 558-6500 and secure your room reservations.

If you would like more information on the 2002 WIC and what it has to offer you, go to www.wmma.org, click on What's New, and scroll down to WIC for more highlights and all your conference forms. You can also find out who has signed up for contact table appointments on the website. This information is updated weekly, so be sure to visit often and schedule your appointments today.

Last call for nominations for the WMMA Ralph B. Baldwin Award of Excellence

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to recognize an individual who has consistently demonstrated outstanding contributions and dedication to their company, our Association and the entire forest products industry. The prestigious list of winners represents the best and brightest of our industry.

The Deadline is February 22 so don't delay getting your nominations in!



A Word on WMMA Staffing

Kenneth Hutton, Executive Director

The only constant in life is change. As the Year 2002 begins, the WMMA staff is undergoing radical change.

For over 12 years, Elizabeth Franks has served the Association in a variety of capacities. Most recently she has been WMMA's Associate Director. After giving birth to her second daughter in late January, Elizabeth is presently on maternity leave. She hopes to return to Fernley & Fernley, WMMA's management company, in a new capacity, but her affiliation with WMMA is presently complete.

For the past 3 1/2 years, Dana Klauss has ably served the WMMA as Director of Meetings and Communications. In mid-February, Dana left the Association to become a mother for the second time; she gave birth to a healthy son. She will return to her home state, Illinois, later this year, but will remain as editor for the Cutting Edge after her maternity leave.

Starting in a new position this month is Jean McCann. She will be Director of Committees with initial staff liaison responsibility for Industry Marketing, Membership and Product & Engineering Standards Committees. In addition, Jean will focus on marketing the Association's products and services to prospective and existing WMMA members.

Business Briefing

Art Raymond, A.G. Raymond & Company, Inc.

Welcome to **Business Briefing**, a new column for *The Cutting Edge*.

Our charge from your association is to provide timely knowledge on the wood products industry and the world in which we all operate. To do so our commentary will come from two perspectives:

Top Down – One focus will be on the economic drivers of your business. Like it or not, your success is tied to the global economy and conditions beyond your control. Starting in our next column a scoreboard will update you at a glance on those key economic indicators that foretell your chances for success or failure.

Our economic comments will also rely on anecdotal evidence, and not only on dry, lifeless numbers. You don't sell to the economy; you sell to people. So we will drill down to the product level to report on the markets for furniture, cabinets, millwork, and other wood products. In our practice we collect tons of information from various trade associations, industry publications, the analysts who follow publicly traded wood products companies, plus less mainstream sources. We also talk one-on-one with the owners and managers at the factory level. This process

exposes us to different points of view on the state of the broader wood industry as well as the goings-on among its players.

Bottom Up – We are not economists (but we did spend last night at the Holiday Inn Express!). Rather we earn our living solving the technical and management problems of wood using companies – your customers. Industries are made up of individual companies and people. Our goal is to expose you to the challenges they face and what can be done to solve their problems. This view will take you to the edge of the radarscope where world-class manufacturers, thought leaders, and academics are testing new ideas.

In short we aim to keep you economically savvy plus broaden and challenge your thinking. One thing is certain – change is inevitable. If your company is not changing faster than the customers you serve, then it is dying. And we want to keep that thought at the forefront of your mind.

You are our customers. We welcome any comments, ideas, and criticism. Please call at 919/831-0070 ext 222 or email at araymond@raymondnet.com.

Looking Back

Art Raymond, A.G. Raymond & Company, Inc.

Let's look back at 2001 and forward to this year in the various industry sectors you sell to...

☒ **Hardwood Lumber** – Mills produced 10 billion board feet of hardwoods in 2001 vs. 14 billion in 2000 – a massive 29% decline. Along with lower volume, prices fell on average about 9%. The strong dollar plus increased competition from Eastern Europe hurt hardwood exports, a strong sales channel over the last 20 years. Hardwood mills are looking to housing-related products – cabinets, furniture, millwork, and flooring – to revive their businesses in 2002 and beyond. With lots of underutilized capacity, capital investment by saw millers could be low in 2002.

☒ **Residential Construction & Sales** – Will low mortgage rates offset low consumer confidence and rising layoffs? The National Association of Home Builders is predicting 2002 housing starts about even with 2001, a near record year for builders. And don't forget that sales of existing homes also stimulate furniture purchases and remodeling. According to the NAHB, these sales should also approach the 2001 rate. If so, housing could lead the way out of the current downturn.

☒ **Kitchen Cabinets** – Buoyed by a strong housing market, many cabinetmakers set sales records in 2001. Remember too that about 75% of all cabinets go to remodeling. Last year kitchen remodeling declined by over 15% in the face of a weak economy, lower consumer confidence, and the reduced wealth effect of the stock market. But experts are forecasting a remarkable 24% rise in kitchen remodeling for 2002. Combined with kitchens going into new construction, remodeling will drive the total cabinet market up about 5%.

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☒ **Home Furniture** – Strong import competition continues to be the story in this segment. Forecasters are predicting furniture demand to grow by about 1.2% this year vs. a decline of 4% in 2001. But how much of this growth will be supplied by domestic factories? The AFMA forecasts that these producers will only recover about 40% of last year's decline in 2002. During the 90's domestic furniture shipments grew by only 56% while imports increased by 218%. US wood furniture makers shipped about 11% less product in 2001 than the previous year. Stanley Furniture, the well managed case goods producer whose imports have been negligible, saw 2001 sales fall by nearly 18%. One company executive recently noted that eliminating 100% of their labor cost would not get their costs competitive with Chinese producers. And therein lies the challenge and perhaps the death knell for our home furniture industry.

☒ **Wood Components** – Imports have also hit the wood component segment. About 30% of component sales go to furniture plants, and imports now account for about 1/3 of all furniture component purchases. The result was a 5% decline for domestic producers' 2001 shipments vs. a steady 10% annual growth during the decade of the 90's. Component producers are consolidating plants to bring capacity in line with demand. The bright side for this segment is the continued reliance of kitchen cabinet makers on purchased doors and fronts plus the emergence of builders, both DIY and professional, as a market for value-added wood parts. To penetrate those markets further, component makers must invest in speed – getting their products to their customers faster.

☒ **Office Furniture** – Downsizing by Fortune 500 companies plus increased use of refurbished desks and chairs hammered the U.S. office furniture industry in 2001. Volume fell by nearly 18% and is predicted to fall another 9% in 2002. Industry giants, Steelcase and Herman Miller, saw 40% drops in their 3Q North American sales. As with all mature markets, price is becoming an important buying factor for office furniture buyers. The traditional distribution channel of dealers/ reps is being confronted with lower-priced product moving

Looking Backward and Forward

through superstores like Office Depot. As a result all domestic producers are focusing on cost reduction and fast customer response. Excess capacity will severely dampen demand for plant and equipment.

☒ **Non-Residential Construction** – Lots of wood doors, millwork, casework, and fixtures go into commercial and industrial construction. Based on the Dodge Index, non-residential construction fell by 4% in the first eleven months of 2001. What about 2002? Unlike the 1990-91 recession the present commercial market is not overbuilt. In addition the 6.4% increase on school building and 7% gain in health care construction plus growth in 'big box' retail will lessen the building downturn in 2002. Sectors predicted to decline vs. 2001 are hotels (-14%), shopping malls/department stores, office

(-7.7%), industrial (-6.6%), and institutional [churches, public buildings, airports, etc.](-1.7%).

☒ **The Bottom Line** – Many experts see the economy improving at least by the third quarter of this year. Their prognostications are based on steady residential construction and consumer spending. Based on their view, new homebuilding combined with remodeling and new homeowners' purchases of furniture, will pull the wood products industry out of the current doldrums. Backing this prediction is The Conference Board's January report showing its leading index increasing for a third straight month. The December increase was the largest since February 1996. More importantly, TCB's coincident index gained for the first time in five months, and their lagging indicator was virtually flat. This combination historically occurs when the economy has turned the corner.

A gloomier outlook is taken by those forecasters pointing at the high level of household and corporate debt. Consumers have kept this recession from deepening. However their debt load has risen steadily during the 90's and is now about 105% of their disposable income. On the corporate level the ratio of debt to profits is higher than during the last recession in 1990-91. If consumer spending declines, the economy will need business investment to take up the slack. The Economist is calling that unlikely and predicting that these debt loads will dampen any chances for a fast, steep recovery.

The unknown: will Congress pass an economic stimulation package? More use of fiscal policy could be the spur that is needed to kick start a recovery. The next six months will be critical. Keep your fingers crossed!

Export Development

China: The Downside of Liberalization

Harold Zassenhaus, WMMA Export Director

(China Focus, Fiducia Management Consultants)

China's recent entry into the WTO will put an ill-prepared China under severe pressure to get things right in a much-shortened time frame. Above all it will take a heavy toll on the manufacturing industry, especially large state companies that have been shielded for 50 years from competition by high tariffs, quotas and licenses. The entry of efficient foreign companies will force uncompetitive state-owned industries to close or restructure, throwing millions out of work. The worst hit will be capital-intensive industries like motor vehicles, metals and petrochemicals, with up to 12 percent of the workforce losing their jobs. The main reason will be lower import tariffs. Moreover, China's inefficient agriculture sector - providing basic living for at least 800 million - could be destabilized by cheaper farm imports from abroad. A mass exodus from farms would add to the already huge army of surplus rural workers flowing to the cities. Except for a handful of large companies, the manufacturing industry in China, with too many plants and high production costs, is woefully ill equipped to deal with the new competition WTO will bring. But whatever the WTO says, there is plenty of room to play around. For foreign carmakers for instance, additional import certificates are in the pipeline and elaborate safety inspections are being implemented to reduce the impact of WTO included tariff cuts. In the past the Chinese government often tended to slow down crucial elements of market liberations in this way.



WMMA Returns from Promueble with New Thoughts on the Market

The Fair

Promueble was held in a partially completed exhibition center, Expo Santa Fe, located in a new and clean area of the city about 40 minutes from downtown. The facilities were perhaps 2/3 completed. Nonetheless, the area in which the fair took place was well lighted and serviced. Once completed, the facility will have 30,000 sq. meters of space on one floor, air, water and electricity serviced from below ground, few columns (3 every 10,000 sq. meters) and good move in and move out facilities. At least four hotels will be completed in the area as well.



Promueble attracts good and relevant attendance from Mexico City, and surrounding states. In comparison to the fair in Guadalajara (Tecno Mueble) it clearly draws a larger crowd. Promueble 2002 had about 300 exhibitors and took up about 17,000 sq. meters, gross. Furniture, cabinets, mattresses, lighting, white goods, television sets, occupied about 60% of the space; 30% was occupied by furniture accessories to include hardware and fabrics; and the remaining 10% by machinery, cutting tools and machinery supplies. Attendance was about 10,000 –15,000.

The uncompleted building, the Mexican economy and the decision by the Mexican equipment dealers association not to exhibit (see below) affected the size and attendance of the fair. Nonetheless, the size and attendance was decent and the fair was considered by many to be a success. It was difficult to assess how well machinery dealers and manufacturers had done since there were no more than 12 machinery or cutting tool exhibitors, with only one, Virutex, showing high production machinery. However, the few I talked with they were happy with the activity. Accessory dealers also seemed to do OK.

"The furniture industry machine suppliers will be better served by attending the Mexico City shows rather than the one in Guadalajara due mainly to the higher attendance of qualified visitors. This was observed

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personally even with a relatively small information booth. The same is true for the panel industry. I had a few inquiries related to the panel industry, which I never had in the three years I attended Guadalajara.”... **Bernard Veltze, Mereen-Johnson**

No dates were set for the 2003 fair.

Meeting with the Mexican Dealers Association

The members of the recently organized *Association of Mexican Suppliers to the Woodworking and Furniture Industry* (AMPIMM) decided not to exhibit in Promueble 2002, resulting in the absence of approximately 3,000 sq. meters of machinery and cutting tools. The association, which is comprised of the major dealers in Mexico save one (Virutex), had major disagreements with the fair organizers centering on participation costs and an uncompleted building.

The WMMA hosted a breakfast meeting to which 7 AMPIMM members attended along with Bernard Veltze of Mereen-Johnson. The meeting went very well as we laid out our objectives of helping our members enter the Mexican market and continuing a relationship to support common interests. Informal discussions followed in which Bernard was able to meet with dealers who were interested in pursuing a relationship further and I talked with the president and director of the association about their plans. By the way, all dealers spoke English.

The reason for the creation of the association was to provide leverage against fair organizers in Mexico City as well as Guadalajara, both to rationalize the number of shows (one per year in either Guadalajara or Mexico City) as well as reduce participation costs. So far, they have not been successful on either front. However, as a group they still control most woodworking machinery and accessories distribution in Mexico.

As a result of the response from the Promueble organizers, AMPIMM has decided to go ahead with their own fair to be held in January or early February 2003. It would include only equipment and supplies to the woodworking and furniture industries. It will be in an excellent facility that I toured, which will be completed next month. The facility will have 21,000 sq. meters of exhibition area with no columns. The floor can be sectioned off into three areas, each with

its own loading docks. It will have two floors of conference space as well. The facility is closer to downtown and, compared to Promueble, will be easier to get to by furniture manufacturers.

In all probability the fair will be smaller than Tecno Mueble or Promueble. It will be hard to attract accessory dealers who have been exhibiting at Promueble for years and therefore reluctant to abandon the show for an untested one in the same market.

The dealer group has held together for 6 months. Its next big hurdle will be to come up with the funds to secure the exhibition space. The one after that will be to amass the funds and expertise to develop and market the fair. The first hurdle should be coming up within the next month. Stay tuned for details.

WMMA Participation/WMMA Booth

Five member firms exhibited through their representative or directly

WMMA booth size: 17 sq. meters

No. of firms sharing booth: 1 (Mereen-Johnson)

No. of Buyers Guides distributed: 540 (300 hard copy, 240 CD)

The WMMA booth was professionally designed and constructed. One half of the space was devoted to a screen area showing the updated WMMA trade fair presentation. We had a number of leads from dealers and end users, which have been distributed to members.

The Market

Domestic consumption of softwood logs was 8 million cubic meters (m³) in 2001 and is expected to increase to 8.5 m³ in 2002. Hardwood log consumption was 1.1 m³ in 2001 and estimated at 1.2 million m³ in 2002. Lumber consumption was about 5.1 million m³ in 2001 (4.0 million m³ in softwood, 1.1 million m³ in hardwood) and estimated at 5.4 million m³ in 2002 (4.2 million m³ in softwood, 1.2 million m³ in hardwood). About 79% of softwood lumber consumption goes towards the construction industry and the remainder mostly to furniture production.

Mexico ships about \$600 million of furniture and furniture parts to the U.S., \$120 million of sawn wood and mouldings, and \$170 million of joinery and wood frames. It is our 4th largest supplier. However,

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Export Development

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the growth in the woodworking industry will probably come from domestic consumption. The Mexican woodworking industry consists of:

- 1,375 saw mills
- 32 plywood mills
- 13 particleboard manufacturers
- 1 fiberboard plant
- 6 resin-processing plants
- 36 large furniture manufacturers and
- 5,000+ small and medium size furniture manufacturers

For the past 11/2 years Mexico's economy has been slowing, largely as a result of the slowing U.S. economy. It isn't expected to bounce back until the U.S. economy picks up. Like everywhere else, the Mexican woodworking industry is concerned over the huge increase in furniture and furniture parts exports from China. And, like everywhere else they are being forced to modify business, production and marketing plans towards exploiting market niches, upgrading equipment, lowering labor costs or a combination of the three.

The changes taking place in the Mexican market can present opportunities for our members. However, it will not come easy or quickly. Many Mexican woodworkers have no idea of the size and breadth of our industry and are accustomed to working with established dealers selling Italian, Spanish and German equipment. If knowledgeable of U.S. sources of supply, many dealers and end users alike are discouraged from pursuing them because we are perceived as not responding promptly, not treating the opportunity seriously and/or have no one who can respond in Spanish when necessary. Additionally, dealers are reluctant to try to source from the U.S. because they fear they will be undercut by U.S. border dealers. So, there is work that needs to be done. Again, long-term commitment to market, honoring dealer territories (it is rare that that border dealers can service the central and southern areas of the country), prompt support and periodic trips to market are important.

*"Distributors (Dealers): [It] has always been a problem to find qualified dealers for representation; however the visits I had with four dealers over two days, indicates the willingness to add USA products to their lines in addition to the ever present Italian products."...**Bernard Veltze, Mereen-Johnson***

There are over a dozen established dealers in the country. Most have regional strengths: Mexico City and the surrounding areas; Jalisco (Guadalajara); Monterrey; and U.S. border regions.

Mexico City and surrounding Distrito Federal is an important market segment of Mexico with some estimates placing the region's furniture production as high as 50% of the country's total. On a related note, getting around the city is not as risky as has been reported. By using "secure taxis" and avoiding walking in some areas, foreign tourists and business persons should have little to fear.

Within the next six months, the U.S. economy should show signs of recovering if not already in the process; the Mexican economy should follow suit. This will pressure the dealers to either go ahead with their plans or abandon them and agree to exhibit in Promueble, if not in 2003 than in 2004. The Mexico City market is too large for them not to exhibit.

As a final note, Mexico signed a free trade agreement with the EU effective July 2001. Over the next 5 years the US preferential customs treatment will have eroded completely. This spells increasing competition from European suppliers. Members need to be aggressive in Mexican market if they want to develop or maintain their market position.

WEL
COME
NEW
MEMBERS

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WMMA Changes Member News Format for Cutting Edge

In order to keep the information presented in the Member News section of the Cutting Edge brief and timely, WMMA has made a few changes in how it will promote this information in the future. No longer will WMMA accept generic company press releases. Instead, you must fill out the form posted on the WMMA website and return it to WMMA. Content will be edited for length, no more than 50 words, please. Also, personnel changes in your company will only be reported if they concern Executive Level management of your company.

WMMA realizes the importance and value of passing along Member News via the Cutting Edge. However, we also must respect the time constraints that all our members are facing today. We strive to bring you the most current industry information in the quickest way possible.

PROFIT THROUGH AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY



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The opinions expressed in any articles by outside consultants are their own views and not necessarily those of the WMMA®.

Public Policy

We Haven't Given Up

John Satagaj, London & Satagaj

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your business. Craftsmen point with pride to their 30, 40, 50-year-old woodworking machinery. Yet, wood machinery manufacturers have paid a high price for the longevity of their products. Product liability claims have taken an exacting toll on the industry and penalized us for making products that last for generations.

The bill does not bar a civil action against a defendant who made an express warranty in writing as to the safety or life expectancy of a specific product which was longer than 18 years, except that this bill shall apply at the expiration of that warranty.

The bill preempts and supersedes any State law that establishes a statute-of-repose to the extent such law applies to actions covered by this bill. Any action not specifically covered by this bill shall be governed by applicable State law.

The term "durable good" means any product, or any component of any such product, which has a normal life expectancy of 3 or more years; or, is of a character subject to allowance for depreciation under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and issued in a trade or business; held for the production of income; or sold or donated to a governmental or private entity for the production of goods, training, demonstration, or any other similar purpose.

Currently, 20 states have some type of product liability statute of repose legislation on their books. For 13 of these states, the 18-year statute-of-repose contained in last year's bill would have been longer than their existing law. However, the bill would have established a statute-of-repose in thirty states that do not have any statute-of-repose at all. It would have also clarified ambiguities in several state statute-of-repose laws. Some states use what is referred to as a "soft" statute-of-repose approach, whereby the length of the statute-of-repose is defined by the "useful safe life" of the durable good. The term "useful safe life" is ambiguous and often times has to be litigated, resulting in costly legal fees for defendants. A federal "bright line," fixed time limit would avoid these costs.

Write to the Honorable (X), United State House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515. Please send a blind copy to us at WMMA.

WMMA Mission Statement

The WMMA shall represent and support domestic manufacturers of equipment and tools used in the processing of wood and wood products from the forest to finished products.

What your WMMA Dues Dollars Buys

Industry Tradeshow Discounts

Worldwide Publicity

Monthly Newsletter

Educational Opportunities

Industry Safety Standards

Industry Statistics

Economic and Benchmarking Data

Regulatory Alerts

Legislative Calls to Action

Internet Links

Leads for New Business

Access to Overseas Distributors

Export Trade Certificate

Networking with Industry Peers

Manufacturer/Distributor Conferences