

KFIA Legislative Update

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Hardwood Checkoff Comment Period Extended - The public comment period for the proposed national Hardwood Checkoff has been reopened on the U.S. Department of Agriculture website. It will remain open until Feb. 18, 2014. The Hardwood Checkoff is proposed to establish an industry-funded promotion, research and information program for hardwood lumber and hardwood plywood. The Hardwood Lumber and Hardwood Plywood Promotion, Research and Information Order, was submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by a Blue Ribbon Committee of 14 hardwood lumber and hardwood plywood industry leaders representing small and large manufacturers and geographically distributed throughout the United States. USDA received congressional inquiries and letters from industry members requesting that the comment period be extended to allow additional time for interested persons to review the proposal. Comments can be submitted at the following link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=AMS-FV-11-0074-0001>

2014 Kentucky Legislative Session is underway and has completed the first two weeks of meetings and things are just now starting to get cranked up. There has not been any specific logging or forestry bills filed yet but some bills have been introduced that are of interest dealing with minimum wage and workers compensation issues. Some of the bills of interest are listed below.

House Bill 1: Amends KRS 337.275 to raise the state minimum wage to \$8.10 per hour on July 1, 2014, \$9.15 per hour on July 1, 2015, and \$10.10 per hour on July 1, 2016. Also defines "equivalent jobs" as those that are equal under the federal Equal Pay Act, or jobs that are dissimilar but equivalent in skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions; amend KRS 337.423 to prohibit wage discrimination on the basis of sex, race, or national origin by prohibiting wage differentials for employees who perform equivalent jobs; provide exceptions for wage differentials based on seniority or merit systems, systems that measure wages by quantity or quality of production, and factors other than sex, race, or national origin. Assigned to the House Labor and Industry Committee.

Senate Bill 63: Relates to the workers' compensation special fund and Funding Commission which amends KRS 342.120 to require the Division of Workers' Compensation Funds to engage in an aggressive attempt to settle special fund claims and decrease costs to employers and eliminates all funding provided to the Labor Cabinet from special fund assessments which is currently over \$26 million. Assigned to the Senate Licensing, Occupations, & Administrative Regulations Committee.

Senate Bill 81: Deals with employee misclassification and amends KRS 336.010 to define contractor, prime contractor and subcontractor; requires the Labor Cabinet to be the determining authority in issues related to employee misclassification; create a new section of KRS Chapter 336 to establish criteria for determining whether a person is an independent contractor, exempting a prime contractor for a subcontractor's misclassification of an employee, and exempting independent contractors from certain benefits. Assigned to the Senate Economic Development, Tourism & Labor Committee.

Go to the members only section of the KFIA website at www.kfia.org to see a list of all the bills that are currently being tracked by KFIA or go to the LRC website at www.lrc.state.ky.us to see complete details on all legislation. You can contact and find your legislator from the LRC website or call 800-372-7181 to leave a message or 502-564-8100 to speak directly to your legislator. Please contact the KFIA office with any legislative concerns.