



2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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The American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA) advocates on behalf of the lumber and building materials (LBM) industry. ABMA represents LBM dealers and associated businesses in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, D.C. We work directly with members of Congress, the White House, and federal agencies to impact the legislative and regulatory process as it affects the LBM industry. ABMA is powered by the Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA) and Construction Suppliers Association (CSA).

HR471: Safer Highways and Increased Performance for Interstate Trucking Act

ACTION REQUESTED: That members of the House support and cosponsor this legislation and Senators consider sponsoring a Senate version.

This bill attempts to address a number of issues that have constrained truck shipments and have prevented new truckers from entering the trucking workforce. In short, the bill would:

- Modernize the authority for certain vehicle waivers during emergencies, allowing waivers in response to disease and supply chain emergencies
- Allow truck drivers to apply for [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) grants](#)
- Incentivize new truck drivers to enter the workforce through targeted and temporary tax credits
- Streamline the CDL process, making it easier for states and third parties to administer CDL tests
- Expand access to truck parking and rest facilities for commercial drivers

The median age of commercial truck drivers on the road today is between 51 and 52 years old. Moreover, the American Trucking Association estimates that the American economy is currently short about 80,000 truck drivers. This bill would help reduce the shortage by offering incentives to new drivers and make the process of obtaining a CDL more streamlined and efficient.

To cosponsor this legislation, contact Elizabeth.Lloyd@mail.house.gov.

Sponsor: Dusty Johnson (R-SD At Large) **Cosponsor:** Jim Costa (D-CA21)

Bonus Depreciation Tax Credit

ACTION REQUESTED: That members of the House & Senate support reinstating the bonus depreciation tax credit to 100% and sponsor/cosponsor such legislation.

The bonus depreciation tax credit, put in place by the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017, allows a company to write-off the cost of new equipment in the year in which it is purchased. Through 2022, businesses were allowed to write-off the full cost of such equipment, also referred to as full expensing. However, this credit is now beginning to phase out. Since Congress did not extend the 100% bonus depreciation credit in 2022, businesses can only deduct 80% of the cost of new purchases for tax year 2023, and if nothing is done, this deduction will completely phase out by 2027.

For businesses in our sector, the ability to write off 100 percent of the value of an asset in the year in which that asset is purchased has been critical. While ABMA companies are relatively smaller in scale, they nonetheless incur considerable capital expenditures on equipment to run their daily operations. ABMA members regularly invest in new forklifts, trucks, and other equipment to move building materials into and around their facilities and ultimately to the construction job site.

The Employer-Directed Skills Act

ACTION REQUESTED: That members of the House support and co-sponsor the bill and members of the Senate consider introducing a companion bill.

The need for workforce development is universal across the LBM industry. There is a growing gap between employer needs and employee skills. Congress needs to invest in recruiting, developing, training, and incentivizing potential employees to fill skilled labor positions. The jobs and career paths in the lumber and building materials and construction industries are far-reaching. Identifying and supporting a workforce to meet the demand for these positions is critical to small businesses nationwide.

The Employer-Directed Skills Act seeks to empower job creators to determine the skills their workforce needs, streamline the process for workers to access skills development, and leverage private sector investments to make employers a stakeholder in the reskilling process. Specifically, this legislation would:

- Allow employers to identify prospective workers to participate in an employer selected skills development program;
- Expand eligible programs to include work-based learning provided by the employer or an outside program from a third-party provider; and
- Provide partial reimbursements for the costs of upskilling programs through an employer-directed skills account.

This legislation updates the 2014 enacted *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) that established a workforce system that provides career services and upskilling opportunities for adults and displaced workers through American Job Centers across the country. While well intentioned, the program is not doing enough to help fill in-demand jobs. This bill will leverage employers to identify the programs that will provide the skills development they need to fill their open positions.

The Employer-Directed Skills Act will put employers at the forefront of determining what training workers need to prepare them for the job and support such training through reimbursements with federal funding.

To cosponsor, contact Marek Laco, Marek.laco@mail.house.gov. The bill is being introduced in the spring.

117th Congress Bill Number: HR6255

Sponsor: Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) **Co-sponsors:** Rep. Virginia Fox (R-NC), Rep. Michelle Steel (R-CA)

Strengthen Supply Chains Through Truck Driver Incentives Act

HOUSE & SENATE ACTION REQUESTED: That members of the House support and co-sponsor the bill and members of the Senate consider introducing a companion bill.

This bill would give certain commercial truck drivers a tax credit in they meet certain qualifications. If a driver's adjusted gross income is \$90,000 or less (\$135,000 for joint filers and \$112,500 for heads of household), and they drove for 1,900 hours in a trade or business in that year, the driver would be eligible for a \$7,500 tax credit. It also creates a new refundable tax credit of \$10,000 for new truck drivers or those enrolled in a registered trucking apprenticeship. This credit would expire after two years.

Truck drivers are the backbone of our economy, and with continued supply chain issues and worker shortages, they are doing more than ever. ABMA supports this legislation because it supports the truck drivers in our industry who deliver the supplies and goods our retail members need to sell and get products to construction sites and other customers.

To cosponsor, contact Isabel Coughlin, Isabel.Coughlin@mail.house.gov.

117th Congress Bill Number: HR7348

House Sponsor: Rep. Abigail Davis Spanberger (D-VA7) **Co-Sponsor:** Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI8)

Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA)

SENATE ACTION REQUESTED: That members of the Senate sign-on to the letter spearheaded by Sen. Susan Collins urging the USTR make it a priority to negotiate a new SLA with Canada.

Ratification of a new Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) with Canada is vital to stability in the lumber and building materials industry. The last SLA expired in 2015, over seven years ago, and in that time, every link in the lumber supply chain has had to confront escalating prices for this commodity. Even with the recent interest hikes, prices are still well above softwood lumber prices in 2015. Additionally, the numerous antidumping and countervailing duty orders issued in that timeframe have served to create an uncertain business environment for producers and consumers of lumber building materials.

While prices for softwood lumber are now approaching their pre-pandemic levels due primarily to interest rate increases and resulting housing start declines, action on a new SLA remains critical. Inflation and supply chain challenges throughout the economy continue to persist. A new, meaningful agreement forged with our trading partner to the North would serve as a stabilizing influence within the housing, construction and building materials dealer sectors.

To sign-on to the letter, contact Michael Mets, Michael_mets@collins.senate.gov.

If you have any questions or for more information, please contact:
Patrick Rita, Orion Advocates, at prita@orionadvocates.com or 202/261-1324 or
Katherine Slye-Hernandez, PhD, ABMA Director of Government Affairs,
at kslye-hernandez@abamalliance.org or 518-880-6376.