



Contact Information:

Renee Hornsby
901-399-7560
r.hornsby@nhla.com

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**Third-Party Assessment Confirms the
Lawful Harvesting & Sustainability of US Hardwoods**

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE – The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) released the findings of its independent research study “Assessment of Lawful Harvesting and Sustainability of US Hardwood Exports” during the 2008 National Hardwood Lumber Association’s Annual Convention & Exhibit Showcase in San Francisco.

The research and report was commissioned by AHEC in response to the increasing global demand for verified legal and sustainable forest products. In certain export markets, most notably in Europe and Japan, government procurement policies and private purchasers are requiring that wood products be shown to be from legal and sustainable sources.

The study, conducted by a team of international experts and led by Alberto Goetzl, of Seneca Creek Associates LLC, confirms that:

- US hardwoods derive from legal and well managed forests.
- Hardwood procured from anywhere in the Hardwood States could be considered Low Risk in all five FSC risk categories.
- There exists a low risk that US hardwoods are produced from controversial sources as defined in the Chain of Custody standard of the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).
- All states in the US hardwood-producing region can be considered low risk for illegal and non-sustainable hardwood sourcing.
- And given the safety-net of national and state regulations and programs that address unlawful conduct and faulty forest practices, the need for traceability, independent chain of custody and/or controlled wood certification to demonstrate legality should not be a crucial consideration for US sourcing of hardwood products.

The study is a significant first step in ensuring and informing the world on the sustainability and green nature of North American hardwoods. “It’s clear from the study that North American hardwoods are the preferred material for buyers seeking sustainable and legal building materials. Hardwood trees grown in North America have minimal impact on the land, and are harvested under a myriad of rules and regulations that ensure consumers a legal and sustainable supply of lumber” stated Mark Barford, Executive Director of NHHLA.

Environmentally conscious consumers, who want to build green, can confidently look toward North American hardwoods to fill the demand for both legally harvested and sustainably managed forests. From alder, ash, aspen, birch, cherry and hickory, to the oaks, maples, poplar and walnut, North American hardwood lumber is a choice you can feel good about.

The full research report is available at www.ahec-europe.org.

The world’s largest and oldest hardwood industry association, NHHLA represents 1538 companies and individuals that produce, use and sell North American hardwood lumber, or provide equipment, supplies or services to the hardwood industry. It was founded in 1898 to establish a uniform system of grading rules for the measurement and inspection of hardwood lumber. Since 1980, its headquarters have been in Memphis, Tenn. To learn more about NHHLA, please visit

www.nhla.com.

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) is the leading international trade association for the U.S. hardwood industry, representing the committed exporters among U.S. hardwood companies and all major U.S. hardwood product trade associations. AHEC's member companies service the growing global demand for U.S. hardwood and represent the full range of hardwood products. AHEC maintains offices in Japan, Europe, Southeast Asia, China, Korea and Mexico, in addition to its Washington, D.C. headquarters, to serve the needs of the global community. For additional information please contact AHEC by phone at 202-463-2720, by fax at 202-463-2787 or consult www.ahec.org.

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