American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) members make sustainable paper and wood-based products that are used daily by people across the country and around the world — products that play an important role in literacy, education, hygiene, food safety, product marketing and protection and home and office construction.

The forest products industry directly employs approximately 950,000 men and women and is built on principles of sustainability: producing recyclable products from a renewable resource. We are among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 states. More than 75 percent of U.S. pulp and paper mills are located in counties designated by the Census Bureau as more than 80 percent rural. We support market-based policies and regulations that foster economic growth, job creation and international competitiveness in this vital sector. We believe public policies are most effective when they meet the economic needs, environmental concerns and societal expectations of our diverse communities.

Top AF&PA 2019 Advocacy Priorities include Recycling, International Trade and Competitiveness, Regulatory and Process Reform, Transportation Infrastructure, and Tax. Visit https://www.afandpa.org/issues for more in-depth information about the range of public policies in which we are engaged.

**PAPER RECYCLING**

The U.S. paper recovery for recycling rate reached 68.1 percent in 2018 and the annual paper recovery for recycling rate in the U.S. has doubled since 1990. By weight, more paper is recovered from municipal solid waste streams than glass, plastic and aluminum combined, according to EPA. Recovering paper extends the useful life of fiber and saves valuable landfill space. Paper recycling is widely accessible, with 96 percent of Americans having access to community curbside and/or drop-off paper recycling programs. The existing voluntary, market-based, paper recovery system fuels innovation, creates lasting infrastructure and enables us to make new products from paper that is diverted from the waste stream.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND COMPETITIVENESS**

Paper and wood products exports account for about 15 percent of the industry’s annual total sales. In 2018, the industry’s global exports were an estimated $33 billion, of which $22.8 billion were exports of pulp, paper and packaging and $10.2 billion were exports of wood products. We estimate that our industry’s exports support approximately 111,000 jobs at pulp, paper and wood products mills and related logging operations in the U.S., as well as many more jobs in communities where these facilities are located.

In an increasingly globalized market, it is essential for U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers to achieve unrestricted access to international markets and level the playing field among international competitors by eliminating both tariff and non-tariff barriers. AF&PA supports the negotiation of trade agreements that reduce tariffs and traditional non-tariff barriers on exports and support U.S. jobs; and better rules in areas such as customs administration, intellectual property protection and the role of state owned enterprises.

**AF&PA also supports the recently negotiated U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement** and urges Congress to approve the agreement. AF&PA is committed to working with like-minded industry groups and Congressional offices to improve provisions that provide greater protection to U.S. investors in Canada and Mexico.
wood products are negatively affected by the tit-for-tat U.S. China tariffs, although we support the administration’s effort to resolve thefts of intellectual property and other issues.

REGULATORY AND PROCESS REFORM
Measures that streamline the permit process and reduce the cost and uncertainty of regulations, including implementation of federal biomass policy that appropriately reflect our industry’s use of carbon-neutral forest biomass for energy production, are long overdue. AF&PA is focused on advocating for system-wide regulatory reforms to ensure public policies do more good than harm, are based on the best available scientific and technical information, fosters innovation and sustainable development, encourages economic growth and job creation and builds public confidence in government. AF&PA also applauds the EPA for advancing common-sense cost-benefit analysis rulemaking that will ensure the benefits of EPA’s regulations will justify the costs – to begin with the Clean Air Act.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
AF&PA advocates for investments and policies that will ease congestion on roads and create safer, stronger highways. We support updating the antiquated weight limits on the interstate so that truck traffic can be reduced in a safe and efficient manner. An increase in the maximum allowable weight of six-axle semi-trailers is an effective and safe way to increase truck productivity and America’s freight capacity. Technology improvements and stronger roads and bridges make it safe for each truck to carry more freight. It would also mitigate the current transportation capacity shortage that inhibits moving raw materials to mills and products to customers. Rail customers are not receiving reliable rail service at reasonable rates. Nearly one-third of forest products facilities have access to only one rail carrier. AF&PA supports allowing forest products access to Surface Transportation Board remedies for poor service and excessive rates.

TAX
The recently-enacted Tax Cuts and Jobs Act encourages economic growth, job creation and the competitiveness of all U.S. businesses. Central to the new tax system is a low corporate tax rate, support for investment in U.S. manufacturing and its global supply chain and an international tax system that reflects a globally-competitive territorial tax system. Our industry is highly capital-intensive and is making significant investments and facility upgrades to reflect technological advancement and compete in a competitive global marketplace. This tax law is essential to investment in the coming years. As the Internal Revenue Service and Department of Treasury implement the 2017 tax reform, AF&PA is focused on appropriate rules related to expensing of capital equipment, interest expense, research and development and international tax policies.