**Actions the Minnesota Timber Producers Association**

**(TPA) has taken on your behalf:**

Thanks to TPA’s lobbying efforts, both during Minnesota’s Legislative Session and through discussions with policy makers at the state, federal, and county levels, a number of issues important to TPA members have been acted upon throughout our 85 year history. Here’s a sampling of how TPA helps loggers in Minnesota:

**Input on County, State, and Federal Issues**

When county, state, or federal government asks for public comment, TPA weighs in on behalf of its members. We not only attend legislative hearings in St. Paul. This year, we represented loggers at a meeting of members of Congress in Grand Rapids, and also at a Congressional forum on the nation’s wildlife crisis in Washington, DC. TPA also regularly writes opinion pieces that appear in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, including one in November responding to criticism of logging in Wildlife Management Areas.

**Northern Long Eared Bat**

The US Fish and Wildlife Service finalized its decision to list the northern long-eared bat as “endangered,” which is set to take effect 3/31/2023. TPA has been working with the Minnesota DNR and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to mitigate negative impacts on the logging community and our ability to manage our state’s forests through a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). TPA worked with allies in Minnesota and around the country to limit the impacts of the previous “endangered” listing and will keep you posted on any changes in federal regs.

**2022 Legislative Session**

In a year when few measures were enacted into law, lawmakers did pass legislation beneficial to our industry, an extension for the proposed Huber project in Cohasset, $5 million for seedlings lost in the 2021 drought, money for LIDAR to improve forest inventory throughout the state, resulting in more accurate timber offerings and appraisals, as well as funds to improve high-speed internet access across rural areas of Minnesota. TPA lobbied at the Capitol in support of all these measures.

**North Star Expo/Future Forest Stewards**

The North Star Expo is not only the state’s largest logging equipment show, bringing together in one place all corners our industry, and its stakeholders, it has also become the site of the “Future Forest Stewards” Program, a collaboration between TPA, the regional economic development agency APEX, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, and the Applied Learning Institute. With workforce issues prevalent in our industry, Future Forest Stewards involves bussing high school students from around the region to the Expo to learn about the forest products industry, including potential job opportunities.

**Advocacy with DNR and other agencies**

When members have questions regarding the administration of timber permits, how truck laws are enforced, or other issues with policy makers, TPA staff utilizes its contacts with various agencies, including DNR, county land departments, State Patrol, and others, to gather information, find solutions, and resolve conflicts.

**Political Action Committee Formed**

Last year, TPA formed “TreePAC,” a political action committee (PAC) designed to show support to candidates for state office who support our industry. Thanks to the generous donations of our members, TreePAC was able to contribute to the campaigns of several candidates during the 2022 election cycle and will continue to show your support for our legislative allies.

**In 2023—Transportation**

In the coming year, TPA will work at the legislature for the ability to haul wider loads on rail trailers to lumber mills that seek to purchase timber longer than 102 inches. In addition, TPA is working on a program to help members train new truck drivers under new federal regulations.

**Ongoing TPA Member Benefits**

All this is on top of ongoing activities, including:

* **Workers Comp Self-Insurance Program with competitive rates and great service**
* **Drug & Alcohol Testing Consortium to keep your drivers compliant with federal regs**
* **Communications to keep you informed on important industry topics**
* **Networking opportunities like our Annual Meeting and North Star Expo**