

■ WEEK IN REVIEW

Forest Service Shortens Comment and Objection Windows on Forest Projects

The Agriculture Department filed a final rule on October 9 that shortens public comment and objection periods for projects on national forests and grasslands. It publishes in the Federal Register on October 13 and takes effect November 12. The minimum comment period falls to 15 days, from 30, for a project documented in an environmental assessment (EA), and to 30 days, from 45, for one documented in an environmental impact statement (EIS). The February proposal had sought 10 and 20 days. Objections must be filed within 10 days after a draft finding of no significant impact is posted on a USDA website, or 20 days after a draft record of decision. That filing period will not be extended. Written responses to objections are due within 15 days for an EA and 20 days for an EIS. With higher-level approval, an EIS response can run to 35 days. The department said the current process adds at least 120 to 150 days to the review of an EA and 135 to 165 days to an EIS. The agency received about 2,270 comments, including submissions from 129 organizations. Projects that opened comment before February 6 stay under the old rule, as do some that opened later, depending on their notice.

Weyerhaeuser Takes Dealer-Channel Rights to Wood Fiber Insulation

Weyerhaeuser will hold US commercialization and distribution rights for TimberHP's TimberBatt and TimberBoard wood fiber insulation in the lumber and building materials (LBM) channel, the companies said October 8. TimberHP makes the products at Madison, Maine, from softwood residuals. Its TimberFill blown-in insulation stays with its current distributors. Weyerhaeuser's sales and distribution teams will work with TimberHP's technical specialists on product education, architectural assistance and installation training. The two companies said they are exploring new wood-based building materials together. The release gave no financial terms.

Urban Evolutions Joins Cambium as Its First Interiors Line

Urban Evolutions, a 27-year-old maker of wall paneling, flooring and architectural veneer in Appleton, Wisconsin, has joined Cambium, the San Francisco wood sourcing and technology company said October 8. Urban Evolutions works with reclaimed, urban and select-harvest wood and with timber harvested by Tribal Nations. Its listed projects include OpenAI's San Francisco headquarters, LinkedIn's Omaha office and Nike SoHo. Cambium called the line its first full interiors offering. No price was disclosed. Cambium bought General Woodcraft, a New London, Connecticut, specialty wood distributor, in July.

■ DEEP DIVE: WOOD FIBER INSULATION

Chips Into Batts

Wood fiber insulation starts as wood chips. TimberHP's plant in Madison, Maine, takes small-diameter pulp trees and residual chips, steams them, pulls them apart into fiber at 90 to 130 pounds per square inch, and flash-dries the fiber. The company's batt is about 88 percent wood fiber, 7 percent borate and 5 percent synthetic binder fiber, with no isocyanate binder. Its code evaluation report lists a density of 2.8 to 3.1 pounds per cubic foot and thermal values of R-14 at 3.5 inches, R-22 at 5.5 inches and R-27 at 7.25 inches. The rigid board, made by a dry process at about 9 pounds per cubic foot, rates R-5 at 1.5 inches and R-12 at 3.5 inches. The board is recognized as nonstructural exterior insulation in Type V-B construction and in buildings under the International Residential Code, subject to its installation conditions.

Europe Went First

The product is established in Europe. STEICO SE, a listed German maker, reported 2025 revenue of 382.9 million euros, up 1.8 percent, and EBITDA of 67.9 million euros, down 14.9 percent. Net income was 17.8 million euros. A production disruption in June 2025 stretched delivery times into the autumn. STEICO guides 2026 revenue to between 375 and 398 million euros. In 2021 STEICO announced plans to invest about 75 million euros in a plant at Gromadka, Poland, with planned capacity of more than 1 million cubic meters a year of flexible batts and about 500,000 cubic meters of board.

The Madison Bet

TimberHP began as GO Lab and bought the former Madison Paper Industries mill, closed in 2016, for \$1.4 million. The plant opened in July 2023 with 70 employees. The 2023 plan called for 140 jobs and about 180,000 tons a year of softwood chips. Loose-fill product came first in 2023 and batts followed in 2024. The board became commercially available in December 2025. The company filed for Chapter 11 in March 2025, carrying \$85 million of 2021 green bonds and about \$30 million of construction overruns. Bondholders committed \$29 million of new money, and it emerged later that year as TimberHP Inc. FTAI Infrastructure lent TimberHP \$5 million in February 2026. In April it converted the note into preferred equity and invested another \$5 million, bringing its investment to \$10 million. On October 8, Weyerhaeuser took dealer-channel rights to the batts and boards.

Codes and Carbon

Separate third-party code evaluation reports cover the batt and the board. The board's report was issued in December 2025. The batt carries a flame-spread index of 25 or less, adds 15 minutes to the calculated fire rating of a wood-stud wall, and qualifies as fireblocking. Specified wall assemblies using the batt, with the gypsum layers and resilient channels detailed in its report, reach a sound transmission class of 50 with 2x4 framing and 55 with 2x6 framing. The board's flame-spread index is 75 or less. The batt's environmental product declaration reports a net-negative cradle-to-gate carbon footprint, with more carbon stored in the wood fiber than production emits. The declaration models manufacturing energy as 32 percent hydropower and 68 percent natural gas.

INDUSTRY & COMPANY NEWS

- **Atlas Engineered Products** said October 8 that it has finished commissioning its first robotic roof-truss line, in a 42,000-square-foot automation facility in Clinton, Ontario. Training and testing are under way on sellable truss production runs. The company calls it Canada's first robotic roof-truss line. The project drew support from Natural Resources Canada's Investments in Forest Industry Transformation program.
- **The National Association of Home Builders** said October 8 that its Remodeling Market Index rose one point to 62 in the third quarter. The current conditions index held at 70, with large projects of \$50,000 or more at 66, moderate projects at 71 and small projects under \$20,000 at 73. The future indicators index rose two points to 54. The overall index has stayed between 59 and 70 for four years.
- **Norske Skog** approved a rebuild of paper machine 6 at its Saugbrugs mill in Halden, Norway, on October 7, at a cost of up to about NOK 850 million. The machine has been idle since a rockslide at the site in April 2023. Once rebuilt, it can make either about 300,000 metric tons a year of kraftliner from thermomechanical pulp or about 230,000 tons of supercalendered magazine paper.

■ KNOW YOUR WOOD: ALASKA YELLOW-CEDAR

The Tree and Its Range

Alaska yellow-cedar, also sold as yellow cypress, is not a true cedar. Botanists have moved it among at least four genera, and the Forest Service's Alaska Region now lists it as *Callitropsis nootkatensis*, formerly *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*. It grows from isolated stands in the Siskiyou Mountains near the Oregon-California line north to Prince William Sound in Alaska, mostly within 100 miles of the coast. In the Oregon and Washington Cascades it grows between about 2,000 and 7,500 feet. Farther north it reaches from sea level to tree line. It is one of the slowest-growing conifers in the Northwest, and 40 to 50 rings per inch are common. Trees can live 500 to 700 years, and individuals have been documented at up to 1,600. Leyland cypress, the hedge tree, is a hybrid of yellow-cedar and Monterey cypress.

Working Properties

The heartwood is a bright, clear yellow with a fine, even texture and a distinct scent from a volatile oil. Specific gravity runs about 0.44 green and 0.47 at 12 percent moisture content, against 0.31 and 0.33 for western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*). It kiln-dries easily, holds its shape, and has unusually high static and impact bending strength for a softwood. Nail-holding is low. Heartwood compounds including nootkatin inhibit decay fungi. Decay resistance is high above ground and only moderate in ground contact. In one four-year stake test, the wood lost about 10 percent of its weight in Alaska soil and about 60 percent in Mississippi. Traditional uses include boats, decking, marine piling, tanks, sash, doors, moulding, paneling, musical instruments and carving.

The Decline

Aerial surveys have mapped more than 710,000 acres of yellow-cedar decline in Southeast Alaska since the 1980s, and more than 120,000 acres in BC. The Forest Service attributes it to root freezing. When early-spring cold snaps hit soil with no insulating snowpack and surface soil drops below 23 degrees Fahrenheit, fine roots freeze. Mortality rose from the late 1800s and spiked in the 1970s and 1980s. Since 2012 it has also appeared in young managed stands. The 2025 aerial survey found active mortality on about 1,650 acres of Prince of Wales Island. The US Fish and Wildlife Service decided in October 2019 that listing under the Endangered Species Act was not warranted. It found the decline affects less than 6 percent of the range and expects the species to persist in thousands of stands.

In the Market

Japan has long been yellow-cedar's main export market and historically took most high-quality logs. Japanese temple and shrine builders use it where they need large, long and wide timbers, and it became the favored substitute as Japan's supply of old, large hinoki (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) ran short. It also goes into high-end homes and hot-spring inns. A fiscal 1998 federal appropriations provision allowed Alaska yellow-cedar to be sold at export rates. It separately reserved a conditional share of surplus Tongass western red cedar for processors in the lower 48 states. BC requires cedar and cypress, yellow-cedar included, to be fully manufactured before export from the coast unless an exemption is granted and a fee in lieu of manufacture is paid. An amendment adopted in December 2023 extended the requirement to the Interior effective February 1, 2024.

■ MARKETS & RATES SNAPSHOT

INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND
S&P 500, October 9 close	7,811.54	Up 1.2% on the week; Dow 51,654.95, up 0.9%
10-year Treasury par yield, October 9	5.24%	Down 4 basis points from 5.28% on October 2
30-year fixed mortgage, October 8 survey	7.40%	Up from 7.28% a week earlier; 6.30% a year ago
US retail diesel, October 5 survey	\$6.199/gal	Down 18.3 cents on the week; West Coast \$7.229
US dollar in Canadian dollars, October 9	C\$1.4271	From C\$1.4246 on October 2; Canadian dollar weaker

■ THE WEEK AHEAD

Mon, Oct 12	- US bond markets close for Columbus Day; US stock exchanges stay open. - Canadian markets close for Thanksgiving.
Tue, Oct 13	- The 180-day limit runs out for the Commerce Department's final results in the seventh administrative review of antidumping and countervailing duties on Canadian softwood lumber. - Comments on proposed PS 2-25, the revised voluntary product standard for wood structural panels, are due to the National Institute of Standards and Technology.
Wed, Oct 14	- September US consumer prices are due at 8:30 a.m. Eastern. - Statistics Canada publishes August building permits at 8:30 a.m. Eastern. - The weekly federal retail diesel survey comes out.
Thu, Oct 15	- September US producer prices, including softwood lumber, hardwood lumber and millwork, are due at 8:30 a.m. Eastern. - September US retail sales are due at 8:30 a.m. Eastern. - Statistics Canada publishes August manufacturing sales.
Fri, Oct 16	- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reports September housing starts. - Advance voting opens in British Columbia's provincial election and runs through October 21, ahead of the October 24 vote.
Mon, Oct 19	The October builder confidence index is expected.
Tue, Oct 20	September US housing starts and permits are due at 8:30 a.m. Eastern.