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 **Advocacy Digest | October 21, 2020**

 **Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**Do not forget to Vote!**

**In person early voting is accruing all over the state for those that may not want to wait in line to vote on Tuesday, November 3. Larger municipalities with staff at their municipal offices will most likely allow you to vote during normal business hours. For those that live in small, rural communities you may want to call your local clerk to learn when you can in person early vote prior to Election Day.**

**For those that will be voting in person on Election Day, polls in Wisconsin will open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.**

**Advocacy Agenda passed by WBA Board of Directors**

**The WBA BOD recently unanimously signed off on the 2021-2022 advocacy agenda which includes the efforts of the contractor certification subcommittee during their online meeting on October 1.**

**Some of the additional highlights of the agenda include:**

* Changes to TRANS 233 to allow flexibilities for minor projects in highway right of ways, utility easements, and buffer areas (landscaping, signs, parking lots) that the current rule does not allow
* Reintroduction of “Workforce Housing Tax Incremental District” provision if not passed to conclude the 2019-2020 legislative session
* Working with the League of Municipalities to pass a statute that requires all municipalities to connect roads between them.  Many towns refuse to allow a village or city to connect to the town’s roads to prevent development and annexations.
* Incorporate into the annexation statute a definition for contiguity that reflects the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s opinion in the Kohler annexation case

Another important piece to our 2021-2022 Advocacy Agenda are changes to the contractor certification law that were put forth earlier this year by the Contractor Certification Subcommittee. These changes will update the law that and codify some administrative rules that went into effect after passage of [2005 Wisconsin Act 200](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2005/related/acts/200).

For the state statutes and administrative rules on contractor certification [click here](../../EVENTS/MEMBER%20MEETINGS/6.24.20/Packet/14_ADVOCACY%20CONTRACTOR%20CERT%20SUB%20COMMITTEE%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf) and for the summary of changes on contractor certification that are part of the 2021-2022 Advocacy Agenda [click here](../../EVENTS/MEMBER%20MEETINGS/6.24.20/Packet/16_ADVOCACY%20LEGISLATIVE%20DRAFT%20AGENDA%202021%202022.pdf).

# From NAHB: [Working Closely with NAHB, Nearly 100 Lawmakers Urge Trump to Act on Lumber](http://nahbnow.com/2020/10/working-closely-with-nahb-nearly-100-lawmakers-urge-trump-to-act-on-lumber/)

Working in tandem with NAHB, nearly 100 Republican and Democratic lawmakers on Oct. 20 [sent a letter to President Trump](https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/advocacy/docs/top-priorities/lumber/lumber-letter-to-trump-from-reps-torres-marchant.pdf) seeking urgent action on lumber supply shortages that have resulted in unprecedented price spikes in recent months that are threatening the housing industry and economic recovery.

“These sharp increases are challenging, especially in light of the ongoing housing affordability crisis,” the congressional letter stated. “The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) estimates the recent spike in softwood lumber costs has caused the price of an average new single-family home to increase by $16,148 since April 17. The market value of the average new multifamily home has increased by $6,107 over the same period.”

The letter adds that housing can create jobs and boost the economy, but in order to do so, we must address the rising costs of lumber and other building materials. Lawmakers called on the administration to “bring all stakeholders to the table and work to find a solution to address lumber scarcity and subsequent price spikes to ensure everyone’s needs are met.”

This is the latest action by NAHB to urge Congress and the administration to address this urgent issue.

* In August, letters were sent to [President Donald Trump](http://nahbnow.com/2020/08/nahb-seeks-white-house-action-on-soaring-lumber-prices/), Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer calling on the administration to take prompt action regarding soaring lumber prices and supply shortages that are harming the housing sector and the economy.
* [A similar message was sent to the U.S. Lumber Coalition](http://nahbnow.com/2020/08/nahb-seeks-meeting-with-commerce-secretary-on-soaring-lumber-prices/) with a request to work together to address shortages in the lumber supply chain caused in part to the COVID-19 pandemic.
* At the end of August, [NAHB Senior Officers held talks with members of the White House National Economic Council](http://nahbnow.com/2020/09/national-economic-council-hears-nahb-concerns-on-lumber/) to discuss the impact that soaring lumber prices are having on the housing industry and to press for immediate action.
* At the end of September, the NAHB leadership reiterated strong concerns regarding the lumber supply situation in a [virtual meeting with Commerce Secretary Ross](http://nahbnow.com/2020/09/nahb-conveys-urgent-concerns-on-lumber-with-commerce-secretary/).

Based on the lumber price trend over the past month, NAHB’s ongoing efforts appear to be showing positive results. Lumber prices are currently roughly $750 per thousand board feet — down nearly 20% from their mid-September peak but still far too high. NAHB will continue working on all fronts to find solutions that will ensure U.S. home builders have access to a stable supply of lumber at reasonable prices to keep housing affordable for hardworking American families.

[View the congressional letter to President Trump](https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/advocacy/docs/top-priorities/lumber/lumber-letter-to-trump-from-reps-torres-marchant.pdf).

**New Political Giving Pages Launched**

**Recently, WBA announced two streamlined websites for members to make personal contributions to the Building A Better Wisconsin PAC (BBW-PAC) and the Builders Direct Fund Conduit (BDF Conduit).**

Building a Better Wisconsin (BBW) is WBA's political action committee, commonly referred to as a PAC. It consists of WBA members from across the state combining their resources to support pro-housing, pro-business candidates running for office in Wisconsin.

PAC contribution decisions are made by reviewing the candidates' positions and voting records on housing and WBA priority issues; decisions are bipartisan.

The Builders Direct Fund is the Wisconsin Builders Association conduit fund.  That begs the next question, what is a conduit?  A conduit is defined by the Government Accountability Board as a*n individual or organization that receives money from individuals, deposits it in a financial institution, and then transfers contributions to any registrant (candidate, personal, legislative political action or political party committee) selected by the original contributor.  The conduit organization or administrator may not exercise any discretion over the amount or ultimate recipient of these contributions.*

Requirements to Donate:
- Candidate name is required
- Donation must be personal and not through corporate source
- Minimum donation of $100 is required
- Funds from BDF can only go towards candidates running for office on state and local levels (not President, U.S. Senate, or U.S. House)

[Click here](https://www.wisbuild.org/checkout/donate?donatePageId=5f57ad65d7a2b403519af4da) **to contribute to the BBW PAC or** [click here](https://www.wisbuild.org/checkout/donate?donatePageId=5f57aac7b4365510c58e08aa) **to make a contribution to the BDF Conduit. Contributions go towards each local HBA’s political fundraising goal for 2020.**