

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 14, 2021

President Joseph Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Katherine Tai  
United States Trade Representative  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President Biden and Ambassador Tai:

The United States and Canada have long had a prosperous relationship benefitting the economies of both nations. In particular, softwood lumber trade between the two countries has been advantageous. Softwood lumber is commonly used for wood-frame residential construction, interior and finishing purposes. Despite the generally warm and mutually beneficial trade relationship, bilateral trade in softwood lumber has been historically contentious.

As you know, in 2006, the United States and Canada signed the Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) which established a system of fees and quotas on Canadian imports to the United States that may be used when the market price for softwood lumber fluctuates. This agreement provided stability in the trade relationship between the United States and Canada.

We recognize the reduction of the tariff from 20% to 8.99% in November of 2020 provided some relief, but lumber prices have continued to skyrocket with reports indicating the price of lumber has increased 300 percent since the spring of 2020 and availability or shortages of certain lumber products is ongoing. With these reports, we request that you prioritize negotiations to reach a new softwood lumber agreement with Canada. We also understand that COVID-19 pandemic has caused supply disruptions and prices have soared, due to worker shortages and shutdowns. Addressing both the Canadian trade issue and supply disruptions would help mitigate the lumber shortages. Please provide us answers the following questions:

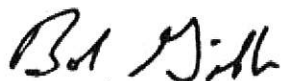
1. Understanding that COVID-19 pandemic has caused supply disruptions and prices have soared, does the administration have a plan to mitigate these disruptions and restore a reasonable supply and demand balance for the nation's softwood lumber producers, builders, and consumers?
2. Does the administration have plans to include initiatives to address worker shortages?
3. What steps has the administration taken to address the Canadian trade issue? If not, what steps if any will the administration be willing to undertake to move forward on a new agreement?
4. Considering the urgency of this issue, can the administration provide a planned timeline of action regarding softwood lumber?

The housing industry's potential for growth is limited as long as lumber remains expensive and scarce. Building 1,000 average single-family homes creates 2,900 full-time jobs and generates \$110.96 million in taxes and fees for all levels of government to support police, firefighters, and schools. Similarly, on

average, building 1,000 rental apartments generates 1,250 jobs and \$55.91 million in taxes and revenue for local, state, and federal government.

We urge you to consider returning to the negotiating table with Canada to achieve a new softwood lumber agreement. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman  
Member of Congress



Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress



Blake Moore  
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly  
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Mike Bost  
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Chris Jacobs  
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Scott Franklin  
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David Kustoff  
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Beth Van Duyne  
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Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Jake LaTurner  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress