

June 14, 2018



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Lawmakers Request Administration Officials Return to the Negotiating Table in Softwood Lumber Dispute

[Washington DC] – 171 members of the House of Representatives have sent a letter to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, the United States (U.S.) Trade Representative, asking that the U.S. return to the negotiating table with Canada and redouble efforts to reach a new softwood lumber agreement. NLBMDA led the way in building support for the letter, and comes as lumber prices have reached record highs.

The Random Lengths Framing Lumber Composite price has increased 46 percent in the past year, and the Random Lengths Structural Panel composite price has increased 42 percent in the past year. Moreover, the Producer Price Index published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that domestic softwood lumber prices have increased 22 percent since the softwood lumber investigation started in December 2016.

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) upheld antidumping duties (AD) and countervailing duties (CVD) on Canadian softwood lumber in December 2017. Most Canadian firms are paying a combined AD/CVD rate of 20.83 percent. For the five companies (Canfor, J.D. Irving, Resolute, Tolko, and West Fraser) that were directly involved in the investigation, the rates vary between 9 percent and 23 percent. Duties do not apply to softwood lumber harvested in the Atlantic Provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edwards Island.

Canada has responded on two fronts in recent months. First, it has requested a binational

panel review of the AD/CVD determination as provided under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Second, at the Canadian government's request, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has created dispute settlement panels to review the softwood lumber duties.

“NLBMDA applauds the action taken by the House of Representatives on softwood lumber duties,” said Jonathan Paine, NLBMDA President & CEO. “NLBMDA would also like to recognize all the dealers who helped raise awareness and build support for this issue.”

NLBMDA spearheaded efforts to amass congressional support for the letter and was helped by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). At the NLBMDA Spring Meeting and Legislative Conference in March, dealers met with their lawmakers regarding the letter. NLBMDA supports reaching an agreement on the longstanding U.S. – Canada softwood lumber dispute that brings stability and predictability to the pricing and availability of softwood lumber without the imposition of duties.

[Click here](#) to view a copy of the letter.