



John C. Fowke  
2021 NAHB Chairman of the Board  
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April 22, 2021

The Honorable Katherine Tai  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Tai:

On behalf of the more than 140,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am writing to request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience regarding the current status of softwood lumber trade between the United States and Canada. The antidumping and countervailing duties currently in place on imported softwood lumber from Canada are aggravating already high lumber prices, and tariffs on other products are also contributing to higher construction costs leading to more expensive housing.

NAHB's members construct approximately 80 percent of the new homes annually in the U.S. and use building products and materials sourced from all over the world, including lumber imported from Canada. Lumber materials comprise anywhere from one-fifth to one-sixth of the material costs in each single home.

Residential construction boosted GDP growth by 2.5 percentage points last year, and construction has remained an essential service in most states, despite "stay-at-home" orders. However, when combined with better-than-expected housing demand and home building activity, along with projects being done by the DIY segment, builders are seeing shortages of lumber and a more than three-fold price increase in lumber prices since last April. These price levels are unsustainable, particularly considering the housing affordability crisis, and a resolution to the U.S.-Canada softwood lumber dispute would help ease market concerns for builders and consumers alike.

In a letter to your predecessor dated September 21, 2020, NAHB expressed concerns over the ongoing U.S.-Canada softwood lumber dispute, and we urged the U.S. to work with Canada to reach a long-term resolution. Today, we reiterate our concerns that the ongoing dispute remains unresolved, leading to further disruptions in the consistent supply and availability of lumber for housing.

While there are many pressing trade matters affecting the U.S. economy, the softwood lumber dispute is one that should not be left on the back burner. Lumber supply, housing affordability, and an industry with the potential to lead the U.S. out of the current pandemic-induced recession should not be ignored.

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We know your availability is limited, but we hope to find a mutually agreeable time soon, either in-person or virtually. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John C. Fowke", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John C. Fowke  
Chairman of the Board  
National Association of Home Builders