

Congress of the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 20, 2020

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We are writing to alert you to a significant issue affecting the economy and housing affordability.

As the nation fights to rebound from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, housing has been a bright spot for the U.S. economy. Construction's designation as an essential service in many states, combined with better-than-expected housing demand, has resulted in strong market activity. Single-family construction permits are running 3.4 percent higher during the first half of 2020 compared to the first half of 2019.

This activity has measurable benefits for job growth in communities. 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, building 1,000 average rental apartments generates 1,250 jobs and \$55.91 million in taxes and revenue.

However, there is concern that this success is at risk of reversal as builders have seen a dramatic increase in the cost of materials, particularly lumber, since the pandemic began. Shortages of lumber have resulted in a 130 percent increase in lumber prices since mid-April. The Random Lengths Framing Composite Price shot past the \$900 barrier for the first time ever on September 4. Oriented strand board prices are up nearly 180% from a year ago.

These sharp increases are challenging, especially in light of the ongoing housing affordability crisis. 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.

Housing can do its part to create jobs and return the economy to what it was prior to the pandemic, but in order to do so, we need to address the rising costs of lumber and other building materials. We understand that in the current environment, producers of building materials face a range of complications in getting their product to market. COVID-19 has shut down sawmills and severely disrupted the supply chain.

In response to these obstacles, we ask your administration to bring all stakeholders to the table and work to find a solution to address lumber scarcity and subsequent price spikes that ensures everyone's needs are met. Your administration can play a constructive role in alleviating this

growing threat to housing and the economy, so home builders can continue to operate, support communities, and avoid passing rising costs on to home buyers.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and considering our request.

Sincerely,



---

Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress



Kenny Marchant  
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress

Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress

Mark Amodei  
Member of Congress

Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress

Jodey Arrington  
Member of Congress

Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress

Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress

Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

Mike Bost  
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress

Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Ben Cline  
Member of Congress

Tom Cole  
Member of Congress

James Comer  
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress

Joe Cunningham  
Member of Congress

John Curtis  
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

A. Drew Ferguson IV, DMD  
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Virginia Foxx  
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

Anthony Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

Lance Gooden  
Member of Congress

Jim Hagedorn  
Member of Congress

Andy Harris, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

George Holding  
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress

Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress

David P. Joyce  
Member of Congress

John Katko  
Member of Congress

Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress

Susie Lee  
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress

Thomas Massie  
Member of Congress

Brian Mast  
Member of Congress

Michael T. McCaul  
Member of Congress

Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress

Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress

Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress

Devin Nunes  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

Greg Pence  
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress

Bill Posey  
Member of Congress

David Price  
Member of Congress

Denver Riggleman  
Member of Congress

Mike Rogers  
Member of Congress

John Rose  
Member of Congress

Harley Rouda  
Member of Congress

David Rouzer  
Member of Congress

Michael F.Q. San Nicolas  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Ross Spano  
Member of Congress

Bryan Steil  
Member of Congress

Greg Steube  
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

Van Taylor  
Member of Congress

William Timmons  
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

Michael Turner  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress

Tim Walberg  
Member of Congress

Mark Walker  
Member of Congress

Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress

Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress

Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.  
Member of Congress

Roger Williams  
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress

Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress

Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Lawrence Kudlow, Director of the United States National Economic Council  
The Honorable Mark Meadows, White House Chief of Staff