

March 19, 2021

Chief Victoria Christiansen
United States Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Christiansen:

On behalf of the more than 140,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I write to encourage you to continue your efforts to better-manage our national forests which will, at least in part, help strengthen the housing supply chain and promote affordable housing opportunities for all Americans.

Improving the health of our nation's forests and increasing the supply of domestic timber are not mutually exclusive goals, and we strongly encourage you to maintain current harvesting plans for the National Forest system. Doing so will restore the health of one of our great natural resources, offer the potential to reinvigorate the forestry industry, and improve housing affordability.

Better forest management practices will not only promote the health of our nation's forest system but also improve housing affordability. NAHB research shows lumber and wood products account for 15% of the cost of construction for a single-family house. Record-high lumber prices are putting the American dream of homeownership just out of reach for hundreds of thousands of potential homebuyers. As additional supply of domestically produced timber is brought into the market, upward pressure on lumber prices will soften.

In 2020, the United States Forest Service (USFS) had a year of historic timber production, selling more than 3.2 billion board feet (bbf) of timber, the second highest level in 20 years. This is welcome news in light of the current, record-high lumber prices and our nation's ongoing housing affordability crisis. We may never return to the 10 bbf harvests that marked the 60s, 70s, and 80s, but a sustained, meaningful annual harvest from our public lands would help.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



John C. Fowke