



November 15, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
 United States Secretary of Agriculture  
 Office of the Secretary 200-A  
 1400 Jefferson Dr. SW  
 Washington DC, 20250

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer  
 United States Trade Representative  
 Office of the United States Trade Representative  
 600 17<sup>th</sup> St. NW  
 Washington DC, 20508

Dear Secretary Perdue and Trade Representative Lighthizer,

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is comprised of the heads of forestry agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. NASF members actively promote the proper management and protection of state and privately-owned forests and are frequent collaborators in the management of federally managed forests. **We fully support this administration’s call for more active forest management.**

I write to you today on behalf of the nation’s state foresters to urge this administration to prioritize Chinese removal of retaliatory timber tariffs as part of “Phase One” of the ongoing trade negotiations with China.

All wood markets, including foreign markets for U.S. wood, allow Americans to generate the revenue necessary for retaining ownership of their land, keeping it forested, and managing it in ways that ensure long-term productivity and health. To put it simply: **Markets for wood are critical to maintaining the health, resilience, and productivity of forests in the United States.**

Americans depend on healthy forests to filter their drinking water and provide wood to build their homes. Privately owned forests constitute the majority of the nation’s forests. These forests produce over 90% of our domestically produced forest products and provide over 30% of our drinking water. Most of the hardwood lumber produced in the U.S. is grown on private forestland; 24% is exported to China and 22% is exported to other countries. **When forestland owners and managers have access to robust wood markets, all Americans benefit.**

The retaliatory Chinese tariffs targeting U.S. timber exports threaten to permanently disrupt existing export markets for U.S. timber. In the 1990s, we watched as market capacity diminished in the western U.S. as a result of litigation related to the Spotted Owl. **Forest products markets for wood in the West still haven’t returned, and they may never return, as a direct result.**

Right now, we are seeing an acute decline in market capacity nationwide due to mill closures caused by the Chinese retaliatory tariffs. **America’s wood products manufacturing sector is in danger of significant and permanent loss.**

Executive Director  
 Jay Farrell

2019-20 Executive Committee

President  
 Vice President  
 Treasurer  
 Past President

Greg Josten, South Dakota  
 Joe Fox, Arkansas  
 Christopher Martin, Connecticut  
 Lisa Allen, Missouri

Northeast-Midwest Representative  
 West Representative  
 South Representative

Forrest Boe, Minnesota  
 Brian Cottam, Utah  
 Rick Oates, Alabama

These Chinese retaliatory tariffs are having a profound negative effect on the timber industry and rural prosperity across the country. **Already, thousands of men and women have lost their jobs in mills and logging, and the livelihoods of millions more tied to the timber industry hang in the balance.**

If we lose any wood markets, we will see less active forest management. **And without active forest management, there will be more catastrophic wildfires and more economically depressed rural communities.**

The Chinese have already begun sourcing timber from new market sources. **It is imperative that these retaliatory timber tariffs are removed as expeditiously as possible to regain American market share in China and retain what domestic industry capacity is left for the benefit of our forests and the American people.**

We ask that you consider our concerns and do what is in this administration's power to do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Greg Josten  
NASF President  
South Dakota State Forester

CC:

United States Secretary of Commerce, The Honorable Wilbur Ross  
USDA Forest Service Chief, Vicki Christiansen