



U.S. LUMBER COALITION

U.S. Lumber Industry Comments on Administration Notice to Congress Regarding Renegotiation of NAFTA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, DC (May 18, 2017) – The U.S. Lumber Coalition is deeply supportive of the Trump Administration’s and Congress’ efforts to grow the U.S. economy by improving U.S. opportunities under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). These issues are of utmost importance to American companies, workers and communities in the wood products and forestry industries, which are critical elements of the U.S. manufacturing base and many state economies.

Chapter 19 of the NAFTA prevents the United States from fully enforcing our trade laws against unfair trade. Due to highly questionable panel decisions under NAFTA’s Chapter 19 dispute settlement mechanism, billions of dollars of unfairly traded goods have entered the United States unimpeded, costing hard working American men and women their jobs.

NAFTA Chapter 19’s ad hoc binational panels currently replace independent U.S. court review of U.S. countervailing (anti-subsidy) duties (CVD) and antidumping duties (AD) imposed to offset the harm from unfair trade, thus handing over the U.S.’s sovereign right to implement its laws to panels which are partially made up of foreign nationals, who may represent their own national and professional interests.

NAFTA Chapter 19 panelists are not appointed by the President of the United States or confirmed by the U.S. Congress -- yet they are rendering binding judicial decisions interpreting U.S. law. Chapter 19 denies U.S. industries their constitutionally protected rights of due process and judicial review. No recourse exists in instances where a NAFTA panel renders biased decisions that run counter to U.S. law.

Chapter 19 bars federal agencies or U.S. citizens from appealing decisions by unaccountable foreign nationals regarding findings of U.S. law to U.S. courts. Only a NAFTA Extraordinary Challenge Committee panel (which also is comprised of private citizens from both countries, not U.S. judges) can overturn an original NAFTA panel decision -- this has never happened.

Under Chapter 19, unfair trade has been accepted rather than disciplined, disallowing U.S. industries a fair chance to compete and costing U.S. workers their jobs. The Chapter 19 system must be eliminated from the NAFTA.

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About the U.S. Lumber Coalition

The U.S. Lumber Coalition is an alliance of large and small lumber producers from around the country, joined by hundreds of thousands of their employees, and tens of thousands of woodland owners. The Coalition is united in opposition to Canada's unfair lumber-trade practices, including the gross underpricing of timber on government-owned lands. For more information, please visit the Coalition's website at www.uslumbercoalition.org.