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### **U.S. Lumber Coalition Disappointed In Wall Street Journal Erroneous Opinion Piece On Softwood Lumber Trade and the Impacts of U.S. Trade Law Enforcement**

- Since 2016, U.S. mills have added eight billion board feet of production capacity and produced 30 billion additional board feet of softwood lumber, more than offsetting the decline in unfairly traded Canadian imports.
- This strengthening of domestic supply lines to build American homes with American lumber would not have happened without strong enforcement of the U.S. trade laws, which work to level the playing field against subsidized and dumped imports.
- Lumber prices saw all-time highs during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21. Lumber prices today are a third of those high prices, but new home prices have continued to climb. From 2019 to the first three quarters of 2024, the median new house price increased by 32 percent, the hourly earnings of U.S. construction workers increased by 24 percent, and the profits of the five largest U.S. homebuilders increased by 49 percent. By comparison, softwood lumber prices increased by only 8.8 percent over this period.
- Total cost of lumber to the builder in an average new home is only about 1.3 percent. It simply is not credible to state that lumber cost drives housing affordability.

“We were disappointed reading the recent The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board Opinion repeating tired old Canada First talking points on the issue of unfairly traded Canadian lumber imports and U.S. housing” stated Andrew Miller, Chairman of the U.S. Lumber Coalition, and President and CEO of Stimson Lumber Company.

“President Trump is absolutely right that we do not need unfairly traded and dumped Canadian lumber imports to supply our market,” added Miller. “Canada overproduces softwood lumber for the sole purpose of maintaining employment in Canada, and they unload their oversupply of lumber into the U.S. market at the expense of American jobs, companies and their communities.”

“The U.S. does not need to import a third of the softwood used in home construction, as the Wall Street Journal states, and Canada’s share of the U.S. market is at its lowest level in decades,” continued Miller. “Since 2016, U.S. mills have added eight billion board feet of production capacity and produced 30 billion additional board feet of softwood lumber, more than offsetting the decline in unfairly traded Canadian imports.”

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The Wall Street Journal does not appear to understand the process of the U.S. trade laws, stating that President Trump “slapped tariffs on Canadian lumber, which Mr. Biden continued.” The process of administering and enforcing these laws is rigorous and transparent. Canada has a strong voice in the WTO-sanctioned legal process that determines the level of antidumping and countervailing import duties

– there are over 120 lawyers working for Canadian interests on this matter in Washington DC. In fact, Canada maintains and enforces similar trade laws to protect its own industries from unfair foreign trade practices.

Canada also has a direct choice in the outcome – it can choose to trade fairly.

“If Canada and Canadian companies do not like antidumping and countervailing duties, then all they need to do is stop subsidizing their industry and stop dumping their product into the U.S. market at the expense of American companies and workers. It is as simple as that,” explained Mr. Miller.

Regarding lumber and the cost of new housing, the Wall Street Journal would do well to look more closely at the numbers before claiming that lumber has contributed to higher building costs. The Journal states lumber prices are up about 35 percent from five years ago. This is incorrect. According to industry publication Random Lengths, softwood lumber prices in December 2024 were 11 percent higher than in December 2019 (five years ago). Other commodities have seen much larger price increases, including building materials such as iron, steel, cement, and concrete. In short, it is not credible to blame softwood lumber for recent increases in U.S. house prices.

“The cost of lumber only makes up about 1.3 percent of the total cost of an average new construction home, and even less in higher priced homes,” stated Zoltan van Heyningen, U.S. Lumber Coalition Executive Director, “so the idea that longstanding antidumping or countervailing duties or President Trump’s proposed tariffs on unfairly traded Canadian lumber imports would cause lumber prices to dramatically increase home prices is nonsensical.”

“Simply put, the cost of lumber doesn’t move the needle when it comes to the price of a new home. Lumber prices saw all-time highs during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21. Lumber prices today are a third of those high prices, but new home prices have continued to climb,” added van Heyningen.

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“We urge the Wall Street Journal to truly study and understand a subject matter before writing and publishing an Editorial Board Opinion. This American industry of hard-working men and women who provide a stable supply of American-made lumber to build America’s homes deserves better from such publications. Merely repeating talking points from Canadian officials and pro-Canada interest groups is not sufficient to publish a credible opinion piece,” concluded Mr. Miller.

#### **About the U.S. Lumber Coalition**

The U.S. Lumber Coalition is an alliance of large and small softwood lumber producers from around the country, joined by their employees and woodland owners, working to address Canada’s unfair lumber trade practices. Our goal is to serve as the voice of the American lumber community and effectively address Canada’s unfair softwood lumber trade practices. For more information, please visit the Coalition’s website at [www.uslumbercoalition.org](http://www.uslumbercoalition.org).

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