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## **U.S. Lumber Coalition Rebutts Canada's Offensive To Dismantle U.S. Measures Against Unfairly Traded Softwood Lumber Imports**

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- Trade measures against unfairly traded Canadian lumber imports are strengthening domestic supply lines by maximizing long-term lumber output by U.S. workers to build U.S. homes.
- 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 any decline in unfairly traded Canadian imports.
- The U.S. softwood lumber industry had the practical production capacity to supply 95 percent of U.S. softwood lumber consumption in 2024. (Western Wood Products Association).
- Softwood lumber prices are currently low and have not kept pace with general inflation in recent years or the past two decades.

John Rustad, opposition leader in British Columbia, recently stated that Canadian lumber is being “replaced” in the U.S. market. Mr. Rustad’s statement at the Truck Loggers Association annual convention in Vancouver summarizes perfectly what has driven the Canadian built-for-export lumber industry to go on an all-out offensive in Washington and in the media against U.S. measures to protect U.S. lumber producers and workers from unfairly traded imports.

“Canada is frantically pushing the idea that the United States needs their unfairly traded softwood lumber by attacking President Trump’s strong border measures,” said Andrew Miller, Chairman and owner of Stimson Lumber Company, adding that “Canada tries to maintain U.S. market share at any cost by dumping their product into the U.S. market at the expense of U.S. workers and companies, and then protesting in apparent coordination with its Canada First allies in Washington when their unfair trade practices result in import measures at the border.”

“Canadian lumber exporters are so desperate to evade the enforcement of U.S. trade laws that they are even pushing the outlandish scheme of using U.S. border tax revenues as a means to get the U.S. industry to drop its trade case against them, with the aim of relieving Canada from having to pay future duties while continuing to dump their excess lumber into the U.S. market,” added Miller. “This notion is an absolute affront to the hard working men and women in the American forestry industry.”

“The Canadian softwood lumber export industry needs to think more creatively about what to do with their excess lumber production, instead of relying on the U.S. market to dump their lumber on the American market to the detriment of U.S. forestry workers and communities,” stated Zoltan van Heyningen, Executive Director of the U.S. Lumber Coalition.

In an effort to escape U.S. trade measures, Canada and their Canada First allies are unashamedly using the recent fire disasters in Los Angeles as the latest reason to promote the false notion that the United States needs unfairly traded Canadian lumber. For instance, British Columbia’s new Forest Minister has

noted that he will work with U.S. organizations such as the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) against any border measures on lumber, while baselessly proclaiming that when Los Angeles is “looking at rebuilding they are going to be relying on BC wood to do be able to do that.”

Erroneous, but persistent, messaging by Canada and NAHB regarding the impact of lumber border measures on housing costs and a “need” specifically for unfairly traded Canadian lumber leads to inaccurate and inflammatory headlines such as “Trump tariffs on Canadian lumber could be a ‘nightmare’ for California’s fire recovery.” And more recently, a headline by CNN “Trump says America has ‘all the trees’ it needs. But fixing the housing crisis may mean depending on Canadian wood.” Headlines like these serve to push an agenda that is not grounded in facts.

“It is frustrating seeing the use of inaccurate Canada First talking points being portrayed as facts in many news stories,” stated Miller, adding that the “fact is that softwood lumber prices are currently low and have not kept pace with general inflation in recent years or the past two decades. And softwood lumber accounts for a very small share of the sales price of a newly constructed home.”

“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,” explained van Heyningen, “so the idea that longstanding antidumping or countervailing duties or President Trump’s 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.

From 2019 through 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.

One must look elsewhere for a solution to new home prices. For example, one key reason that there is a growing shortage of affordable housing is because home builders have “largely stopped building starter homes that consumers within 80 percent of the median income can afford to buy,” according to a recent statement by Sam Khater, Chief Economist of Freddie Mac, hence contributing to “rising housing costs that continue to keep inflation elevated.”

Miller also noted that organizations such as the NAHB have carried out a policy to oppose internationally-accepted restraints on unfairly traded building products, even pledging to “work with ... the governments of other countries and industry” to help achieve this objective. Over the years NAHB and Canada have held numerous meetings together and appear to be well coordinated in their messaging attacking the enforcement of the U.S. trade laws against unfairly traded Canadian lumber imports.

“It is unfortunate that certain organizations that are supportive of Canada continue to prioritize access to dumped and subsidized products over fair trade at the expense of strengthening domestic supply lines of domestic lumber. A more productive approach would be to promote U.S. self-sufficiency in lumber production, as evidenced by the recent robust expansion of U.S. sawmill investment and capacity expansion that has occurred with the industry’s use of the U.S. trade laws,” stated Miller.

Indeed, since 2016, through the enforcement of the U.S. trade laws, 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.

According to data from the Western Wood Products Association, the U.S. softwood lumber industry had the practical production capacity to supply 95 percent of U.S. softwood lumber consumption in 2024. (Data current through October 2024.)

“Continued strong enforcement of the U.S. trade laws against unfairly traded Canadian lumber imports is exactly what must happen to keep expanding U.S. lumber manufacturing and availability to build more American homes,” concluded 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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