

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write on behalf of private forest landowners, forestry agencies, businesses, and associations from across the country who collectively represent a forestry sector supporting 3.9 million American jobs to underscore a growing national security crisis that threatens America's timber supply, rural economies, and long-term energy independence.

On March 1st, you signed an Executive Order directing federal agencies to boost the domestic production of timber and wood products—a clear recognition that working forests are critical to our economic resilience, housing supply, consumer products, energy production, and national security. Today, that directive faces unprecedented headwinds.

Hurricane Helene inflicted significant timber losses in several southern states, including \$1.28 billion in losses, in Georgia alone. Moreover, the recent closure of two mills in Savannah and Riceboro Georgia have eliminated nearly 1,100 jobs and destabilized the very heart of the forestry value chain in those communities. These blows are the latest in an alarming national trend: since 2014, more than 31 pulp and paper mills have closed across the country, removing at least 42 million tons of pulpwood demand and \$20.9 billion in sales and manufacturing from the US timber economy. This is leaving communities across America without markets, jobs, or the certainty needed to keep forests in forests.

The challenges are mounting nationwide:

- **Natural disasters**—hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, ice storms, and floods—destroy millions of acres of timber each year.
- **Pests and diseases**—including Southern pine beetle infestations, spruce budworm outbreaks, sudden oak death, and other pests and pathogens—are devastating entire stands of timber.
- **Mill closures** nationwide are stripping markets from landowners and rural workers, leaving them without outlets for their timber.
- **Unfair foreign trade practices** undercut U.S. producers and distort global markets, eroding our ability to compete.

Together, these forces are pushing many landowners to exit forestry altogether. If forests are abandoned or converted, the consequences for our domestic timber supply, markets for housing, consumer products, and energy, rural livelihoods, and environmental security will be severe. This is not just a regional concern—it is a national crisis. Strong working forests are important to America's overall economic strength.

There are three immediate steps your Administration can take to support the goals of your March 1st order by removing impediments and providing certainty to landowners and communities:

1. **Advance the Disaster Reforestation Act**—Allow landowners to deduct their timber lost to natural disasters, so they can replant and keep forests as forests after events like Helene and catastrophic wildfires.
2. **Expand the definition of qualifying woody biomass in the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS)**—Clarifying and expanding the definition of woody biomass in the RFS so that small trees, harvest residuals, and mill residuals can be made into transportation fuel for aviation, shipping, and other applications, would open new markets for low-value wood, help wildfire prevention, improve forest health, and strengthen rural economies while increasing American energy production.
3. **Promote biomass for electricity**—Promoting biomass for electricity production to power homes and manufacturing would rapidly contribute to wildfire risk reduction and support the wood product supply chain, since biomass power producers are the nation’s largest users, by volume, of wood residuals.

Mr. President, America’s private forests are a strategic asset. They provide the raw materials for housing, consumer products, and renewable energy, while supporting millions of jobs. Without decisive action, we risk losing this foundation of our economy and national security.

We urge you to act quickly—by advancing the Disaster Reforestation Act and securing woody biomass in the RFS—to ensure that America’s working forests remain strong, resilient, and productive for generations to come.

Sincerely,

List of Associations, Businesses, and Landowners

CC:

The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House

The Honorable John Thune, United States Senator

The Honorable Doug Burgum, Secretary of the Interior

The Honorable Howard Lutnick, Secretary of Commerce

The Honorable Greer Jamieson, United States Trade Representative

The Honorable Brooke Rollins, Secretary of Agriculture

The Honorable Scott Bessent, Secretary of the Treasury

The Honorable Lee Zeldin, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency

The Honorable Tom Schultz, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service

The Honorable Susie Wiles, White House Chief of Staff