

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2016

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

The United States and Canada have long had a close, productive, and mutually beneficial relationship. As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's state visit to Washington, D.C. on March 10 is rapidly approaching, we request that you prioritize a few issues critical to our constituents and Americans across the country during any working meetings or negotiations that may occur during the visit. In particular, we urge you to highlight the importance of renegotiating the now-expired Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) and to address issues related to the grading of U.S. wheat that is exported to Canada.

The expiration of the SLA poses tremendous challenges for Montana's twelve sawmills, millwork, and treating facilities, and five engineered wood and panel product facilities. Our state's wood product industry has been consistent in their message that a new agreement is a necessity. The global market has changed since the agreement's original inception; therefore, we believe it is of utmost importance that the U.S. and Canada come together as swiftly as possible to identify new terms to the SLA. We urge you to deem this agreement as a priority, particularly in light of the challenges our timber industries face in our local, national, and global markets.

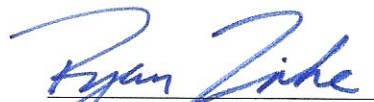
Additionally, as you know, the U.S. is Canada's largest wheat export market and Canadian producers compete equally with their U.S. counterparts when exporting into the U.S. As the Canada Grains Act and Varietal Registration System requires imported wheat to be graded at the lowest standard established, the result is that imported U.S. wheat is treated less favorably when compared to Canadian product. This distinction puts U.S. wheat at a significant disadvantage when it enters the Canadian market, and we encourage you to support efforts to establish reciprocal grading standards of wheat and barley between the U.S. and Canada.

We look forward to working with you on these issues further and appreciate your consideration of our requests as you prepare for Prime Minister Trudeau's upcoming state visit.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator



RYAN ZINKE
Member of Congress