

United States Senate

March 9, 2017

COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND
FORESTRY
APPROPRIATIONS
ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative – Designee
Presidential Transition
1800 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Lighthizer:

Congratulations on being nominated as the next United States Trade Representative (USTR). Serving as USTR is a great honor and I look forward to working with you to expand opportunities in foreign markets for Montana agriculture, ensure Montana's lumber mills can compete on a level-playing field, and reduce barriers for Montana manufacturing exports. I also invite you to Montana to visit with producers and manufacturers from across the state.

Ensuring that Montana producers are treated fairly in foreign markets is critical to Montana jobs and our economy. Unfortunately, unfair restrictions are often placed on many Montana goods. For example, China limits Montana ranchers' ability to sell beef into its market, Canada discriminates against U.S. wheat within its grading system, and Japan imposes unfair foreign taxes on Montana barley. I urge you to prioritize these issues, enforce existing trade agreements, and work to reduce foreign tax and regulatory barriers facing Montana producers and manufacturers as they compete for the 95% of the world's consumers that live outside of the United States.

Another critical issue is the ongoing softwood lumber dispute with Canada. Over the past generation, harvests on federal forests in Montana are down over 70%, the number of Montana mills has fallen from 30 to eight, and we have seen a 40% reduction in the wood products workforce. While excessive regulations and chronic litigation from fringe groups are largely responsible for this decline, unfairly subsidized Canadian softwood lumber imports have also had a significant impact on Montana jobs. I urge you to work to establish a fair and effective softwood lumber agreement with Canada. If that does not occur and as the related U.S. industry trade case moves forward, please support and utilize appropriate trade remedies to the greatest extent possible.

Congratulations again on your nomination, and I look forward to continuing to dialogue with you and your administration, as well as hosting you in Montana.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator