



U.S. LUMBER COALITION

U.S. Lumber Coalition Welcomes Extension of U.S.-Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement; Calls on Canada to Improve Compliance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Zoltan van Heyningen | zoltan@uslumbercoalition.org | 202-582-0021

WASHINGTON, DC (January 23, 2012) - The U.S. Lumber Coalition today welcomes the announcement by the U.S. Trade Representative that the United States and Canada have agreed to extend the 2006 Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) for a period of two years. The SLA will now remain in effect through October 2015 – extending a period of stability and predictability to trade in softwood lumber products between the two nations.

“The Softwood Lumber Agreement is a compromise agreement that is not ideal from the U.S. industry’s perspective. Nevertheless, we support extension of this agreement with the expectation that Canada will improve its record of compliance with this trade agreement,” said Steve Swanson, Chairman of the Coalition and President of the family-run Swanson Group in Oregon, adding that if Canada does not comply, then “the U.S. government must continue to take appropriate enforcement steps to effectively address trade agreement violations by Canada.”

Mr. Swanson expanded by explaining that “the Coalition will continue to work with the U.S. government to ensure that this agreement is enforced,” but added that “if the U.S. industry continues to find itself having to seek multiple arbitrations to address Canada’s unwillingness to adhere to its commitments under this trade agreement, then U.S. industry has to seriously consider whether it would not be better off exercising its rights under U.S. trade laws.”

Canada’s compliance record in the first five years of the SLA has been uneven at best. Independent dispute resolution panels have found Canada in breach of its obligations and prescribed measures to offset the resulting injurious effects on American companies and workers. A proceeding is ongoing against Canada’s misgrading and mispricing of Crown timber in the Interior region of British Columbia.

“Multiple rulings by Independent dispute resolution panels confirm that Canada has repeatedly violated its obligations under this trade agreement. It is essential that Canada complies with, and lives up to, its obligations under this trade deal,” stated Mr. Swanson, adding that “Improved Canadian compliance would give U.S. industry the confidence it needs in Canada’s compliance with its trade obligations to pursue long-term trade agreements instead of returning to traditional trade litigation.”

####

About the U.S. Lumber Coalition

The U.S. Lumber Coalition is an alliance of large and small lumber producers from around the country, joined by hundreds of thousands of their employees, and tens of thousands of woodland owners. The Coalition is united in opposition to Canada's unfair lumber-trade practices, including the gross under-pricing of timber on government-owned lands. For more information, please visit the Coalition's website at www.uslumbercoalition.org.