

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 2, 2016

Gina McCarthy, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We are writing to express our strong concerns with the Interim Recommendations released by EPA on September 25, 2015 regarding environmental standards and ecolabels for use in federal procurement. We are disappointed to see that the recommendation for lumber and wood in construction excludes many American-grown forest products by recommending only those products certified to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

We urge you to immediately revise this flawed action by adding recognition for wood products that are certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) as recommended for federal purchasing for lumber and wood.

Across the United States, there are more than 82 million acres of forestland certified to either SFI or ATFS. This represents more than 70% of all certified forests in the U.S. ATFS and SFI certified forests are managed to provide a renewable timber resource, clean water, wildlife habitat, and numerous other public benefits. These forests also provide thousands of jobs in the forest sector and related industries.

By excluding SFI and ATFS standards from the recommended standards for federal procurement, the EPA is sending a terribly flawed and misinformed signal to the rest of the federal government, and to the private sector, which looks to the federal government for guidance on environmental purchasing.

The action discredits the use of wood in government construction. This makes no sense when wood is one of the best materials architects and engineers have for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and storing carbon in buildings. Wood is a cost-effective, energy-efficient, renewable and sustainable solution for building construction.

EPA's position is inconsistent with numerous other federal agencies that have recognized and supported the use of wood in building construction, including wood certified to SFI and ATFS alongside FSC. For example, the Department of Agriculture's BioPreferred Program, which EPA has acknowledged sets mandatory purchasing requirements for federal agencies, fully recognizes wood products and accepts all three forest certification programs. EPA's recommendation is even inconsistent with guidelines listed in other places on EPA's website.

Additionally, EPA failed to follow a fair and transparent process for determining which standards to recognize for wood and lumber, as this recommendation was never made available for public comment.

We urge you to rectify this flawed recommendation and issue a revision to your Interim Recommendations by adding SFI and ATFS to the certification list for lumber and wood.

Sincerely,



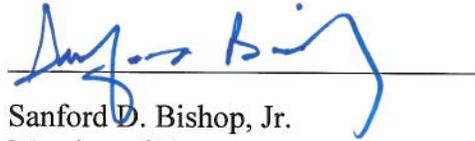
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Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



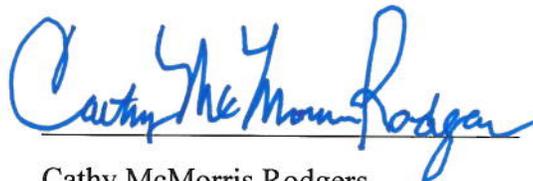
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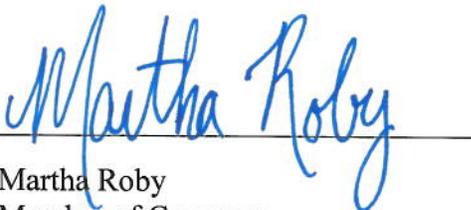
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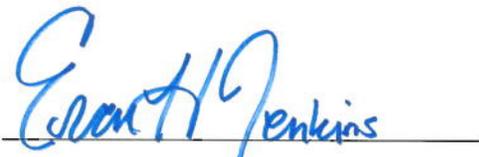
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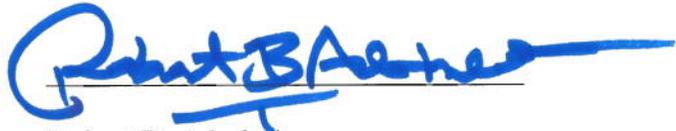
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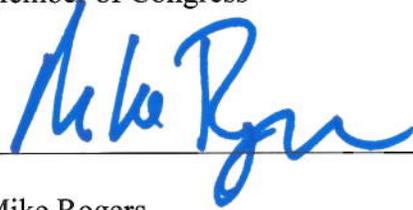
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