

April 6, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today applauded the announcement by United States Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk to place tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber imports. The Canadian government, in violation of the Softwood Lumber Agreement, has been subsidizing the Canadian lumber industry. These illegal subsidies have allowed Canadian timber companies to dump their lumber into the American market at well below the true market price. These imports have decimated the U.S. timber industry at a time when the economic crisis has reduced the demand for timber. Canada's illegal action has put U.S. sawmills, workers, and communities across America in jeopardy.

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"I am happy that the Obama Administration is finally standing up to the Canadian government and their illegal activities by placing tariffs on Canadian lumber," DeFazio said. "The timber industry is extremely important to Southwest Oregon and Canada's illegal activities have caused our mills to close and cost thousands of Oregonians their jobs."

The Bush Administration renegotiated the Softwood Lumber Agreement in 2006, but was unwilling to crack down on Canada's frequent violation of the trade agreement since then.

"The free trade disciples in the Bush Administration refused to stand up for American workers and American jobs. The path forward is one of balanced trade in which workers are not just a commodity looking for the lowest wages," said DeFazio