Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2016

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

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We are writing in follow up to the letter that we and 24 other Members sent to you on March 2, 2016, regarding Interim Recommendations for federal procurement released by EPA on September 25, 2015. As noted in that letter, we were disappointed that the recommendation for lumber and wood in construction excluded many North American grown products by excluding those certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS).

We appreciate your comments on this topic during the March 22, 2016, Energy and Commerce Committee hearing on the EPA budget. You noted that your agency is reviewing other standards and how those might be accounted for in your recommendations. We thank you for that consideration and are anxious to know when we might expect to see the outcomes of that consideration.

A significant development we want you to build into your view is the recent announcement by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to encourage more use of responsibly sourced wood products, including products certified to SFI and ATFS within its LEED rating systems. Previously USGBC recognized only FSC certified products. While USGBC is a private sector organization and EPA should make its decision independent of USGBC's perspective, it's important to note that now USGBC as well as USDA's BioPreferred program, a government program, recognize all three certification systems.

We applaud this decision by USGBC. We believe USGBC's decision applies equally well for this situation pertaining to EPA's recommendations. First, that it is important to have a level playing field when it comes to recognizing forest certification standards. And second, creating market opportunities for all certified forests will help encourage more responsible forestry.

As before, we urge you to immediately rectify this flawed recommendation and issue a revision to your Interim Recommendations. By joining USGBC, USDA's BioPreferred program, and many other government and private sector programs to recognize SFI and ATFS, EPA will allow a significantly larger portion of sustainable wood products for use in government construction thus creating more markets for US forest landowners.

Sincerely,

KURT SCHRADER
Member of Congress

GREGG HARPER
Member of Congress

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER
Member of Congress

SANFORD D. BISHOP JR.
Member of Congress

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