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Wyden Blasts Decision on Subsidized Softwood Lumber

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Finance Committee Ranking Member Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., criticized the Commerce Department’s announcement of a two-month delay in levying final tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber that is subsidized and dumped in the United States.

“The administration’s decision forces American companies to pay the price for continued talks with Canada. This delay creates a window for Canadian companies to ship subsidized lumber to the U.S. without paying tariffs, inviting major harm to U.S. producers and workers,” Wyden said. **“I support continued negotiations to reach a lasting solution on softwood lumber, but more talks need not and should not come at the cost of not enforcing the law.”**

The Department of Commerce announced a two-month delay in its final subsidy determination for softwood lumber from Canada, until November 14. Secretary Ross issued a statement indicating that the delay is intended to provide more time to negotiate with Canada. Because WTO rules and U.S. law prohibit the United States from collecting countervailing duties in the absence of a final determination if more than 120 days have passed since the preliminary determination, this decision will effectively result in a lengthy period during which the 20% antisubsidy tariff on softwood lumber does not apply to Canadian imports (the “gap” period). Customs brokers have already begun alerting clients to the opportunity to import lumber without CVD cash deposits.

In 2016, the Commerce Department initiated investigations into Canadian dumping and subsidization of softwood lumber exported to the United States. In July, Wyden and a bipartisan group of Finance Committee members urged the Trump Administration to negotiate a strong agreement to address Canada’s subsidies for softwood lumber.

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