



STATE OF MAINE
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

July 5, 2016

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker,

I am writing to express my disappointment regarding the way in which the Department of Commerce has conducted itself regarding a plan to save Maine's forest-based economy. Over the years, the federal government has hurt Maine and while the Obama administration believes it can save the day with another failed stimulus package for Maine paper mills it only provides false hope.

Maine faces challenges put in place by Democrats decades ago. We know high energy costs, unreasonable taxation and poor management of the tree growth program are major setbacks in Maine. I have personally worked in the management of forest product industry companies, and I frequently talk face to face to CEOs and owners of these companies. The industry executives I talk to all agree we must reduce energy costs, lower taxes and implement better management of our natural resources.

While your economic team may be well-intentioned, at the same time your administration has hurt Maine's paper mills by placing tariffs on the industry. When the federal government acknowledges these tariffs are bad for business, then and only then will we be able to find common ground. Until then, I respectfully request you focus on what economic strategies enable states to succeed. There are common denominators to success, such as low energy costs and low taxes.

Maine understands its challenges and our administration will continue to work on solutions. Meanwhile, I would appreciate your reconsideration regarding the tariffs that place an unnecessary burden on our businesses, which employ hundreds of Mainers. Maine and the United States cannot afford to lose these jobs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul R. LePage".

Paul R. LePage
Governor



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