

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

As you continue to negotiate the final Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) omnibus bill, we are writing to request that you include additional funding for the Pandemic Assistance for Timber Haulers and Harvesters (PATHH) program, which had a shortfall of \$185 million. This additional funding will not only provide much needed support for our nation's forest products industry that has experienced significant financial hardship since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will also fulfill the demand for assistance that was unmet by the program in 2021.

The plight of our forest products industry has increasingly worsened since March of 2020 when the pandemic crashed global pulp and paper markets and housing starts dwindled. Over the past two years, domestic paper mills across the country have drastically lowered output or shut down their operations altogether, which the American Loggers Council projects has led to a reduction of \$1.83 billion - a 13 percent loss - in the value of logger-delivered wood. The economic loss has had devastating consequences for rural communities across the country that are supported by our loggers, log haulers, and mills.

That is why on a bipartisan and bicameral basis, Congress provided \$200 million in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021* for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced a loss of at least 10 percent between January 1 and December 1, 2020, compared to the same period in 2019. In the months following the opening of the PATHH program at USDA in July of 2021, over 5,600 applications were submitted representing \$385 million in eligible assistance determinations, nearly double the funding available. Consequently, the agency had to adjust the original benefit formula to a point where in many cases, the amount of financial assistance was reduced to less than half of what the applicant would have been originally eligible for.

By appropriating additional funding for the PATHH program, Congress can ensure that the hard-working men and women of our forest products industry receive the full financial support they need to keep their businesses open.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



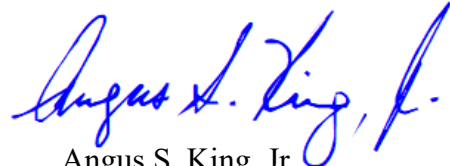
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
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Pete Stauber
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