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SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

April 5, 2018

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

RE: Investigations 701-TA-8584 and 731-TA-1382

Dear Secretary Ross and Ambassador Lighthizer:

I write today to express concerns regarding the Commerce Department's preliminary determination in the antidumping duty investigation of imports of uncoated groundwood paper from Canada.

It is my understanding that this proposed determination would benefit only a single U.S. petitioner that employs approximately 260 individuals at one mill. By comparison, the U.S. newspaper publishing and commercial printing sector employs more than 600,000 hardworking Americans in locations across the United States. These jobs are at risk by the proposed determination. Furthermore, the majority of U.S. newsprint manufacturers, as well as the national trade association for the U.S. forest and paper industry, the American Forest and Paper Association, as well as their major U.S. customers, oppose the initial petition.

Over the last ten years, there has been a dramatic and well-documented shift toward digital alternatives to printed products by both consumers and advertisers. Accordingly, there has been reduced demand for newsprint in North America given this structural shift in media and advertising. In fact, North American newsprint demand has declined by over 75 percent since the year 2000.

Notwithstanding the decline in demand, people in small and medium-sized towns all over America continue to depend on their local newspapers. The proposed determination threatens to put those newspapers out of business and cut off thousands of American communities from their local news.

Newspaper publishers have also seen a significant decrease in advertising revenue, and as a result, it is unlikely that they could pass along to consumers any increased production costs associated with these duties. Trade sanctions could hurt U.S. manufacturers of groundwood paper and their employees, since a decrease in demand would further exacerbate the decline in these jobs.

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The Honorable Wilbur Ross and The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer

Page 2

Uncoated groundwood paper demand has been in steady decline in both the United States and Canada. It is market erosion, not unfair trade, causing today's competitive turmoil and job losses in the newsprint and commercial printing sectors. As Commerce takes final action later this year, I urge the Department to fairly assess the potential impacts any punitive duties on uncoated groundwood paper could have on hundreds of thousands of American jobs and take into consideration access to local news for America's rural communities.

With great respect,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Flores". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Flores
Member of Congress