

News Release

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MACLAREN WELCOMES U.S. ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FULL REFUND OF SOFTWOOD LUMBER DUTIES

The Honourable Roy MacLaren, Minister for International Trade, welcomed today's announcement by the U.S. government that there will be a full refund with interest of the estimated \$800 million in interim duties collected on Canadian softwood lumber. The completion of the refund process will give full effect to the outcome of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) binational softwood panel review.

"With this U.S. action, we can now put this case behind us. The close co-operation and teamwork among industry, the federal and provincial governments throughout this difficult case is largely responsible for this satisfactory result," Mr. MacLaren stated. "The resources spent in litigating this case would have been better focussed on the many forestry issues common to both countries."

"We must now take into consideration the fact that the lumber situation in North American markets has changed dramatically," Mr. MacLaren said. "Canada and the United States must place a high priority on ensuring the sustainable development of the North American forest resource."

Mr. MacLaren announced that, in order to provide a forum for future bilateral co-operation in this sector, the U.S. Trade Representative and he have agreed to establish a Canada-U.S. consultative process on forestry issues. The overall mandate of this consultative process is to enhance bilateral co-operation in areas of mutual concern and interest within the forestry sector.

