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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

April 9, 2018

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The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

Previously on December 21, 2017, I was the co-signer of a letter sent expressing my concern with the pending antidumping and countervailing duty investigations into the import of uncoated groundwood paper from Canada, which includes newsprint.

Since the start of the year, Commerce has moved forward with several rounds of punitive duties against Canadian companies, many of which have presence in the United States. For some producers, these tariffs are as high as 32%. This is creating an untenable situation for small and medium sized publishers in West Virginia and elsewhere. At a time when written news is declining and almost daily we are hearing about layoffs at newspapers across America, most newspapers have little margin to absorb these higher costs. Many have begun to change the frequency in which they publish, or are considering shuttering all together.

Further, the tariffs appear to only benefit a single paper supplier, which represents an outlier in the industry. That supplier is owned by a New York based hedge fund and incorrectly argues that Canadian imports are being dumped into the United States. In reality, the newspaper industry has transformed radically over the past decade, shifting many of its resources into the digital space. This is responsible for the issues the supplier is having with their business.

The citizens of our country understand that there are aspects of NAFTA and other trade deals that must be re-negotiated and are supportive of President Trump's attempts to modernize our trade deals and ensure that American workers are not left behind. However, these tariffs put thousands of jobs at risk and are ill advised.

Please consider that any positives of these duties are strongly outweighed by the negatives that they will have on jobs, as well as rural and small town America's access to local news in their communities.

Sincerely,


David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress

CC: President Donald J. Trump

Ambassador Robert Lighthizer