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AF&PA News

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AF&PA Statement on U.S. - Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement

WASHINGTON – AF&PA President and CEO Donna Harman today issued the following statement regarding the announcement of agreement on the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

“AF&PA applauds the Obama Administration for reaching an agreement with Colombia on labor and judicial issues that will allow for Congressional action on the long-dormant U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA). We believe trade agreements, such as the Colombia TPA, are essential for U.S. competitiveness and creating a level playing field for companies here at home. When companies are able to compete, they are more likely to grow and create jobs. The agreement will lower trade barriers for U.S. forest products and will promote sustainable development and management of forest resources in Colombia.

“Colombia is a growth market for U.S. forest products, with exports to that country reaching \$249 million in 2010. Under the TPA, the U.S. forest products industry will benefit from the phase-out of Colombia’s import tariffs, which average more than 12 percent on paper and wood products. The industry will also benefit from the overall reduction of tariff barriers for all U.S. exports as expanded exports of U.S. agricultural and manufactured products to Colombia will increase domestic demand for paper and wood packaging materials.

“The U.S.-Colombia TPA will facilitate the development and improvement of environmental protection, including sustainable forest management. This is significant since U.S. forest products companies operate in a global market where issues surrounding the legality and sustainability of timber and other manufactured forest products are growing in importance.

“AF&PA has supported the passage of the U.S.-Colombia TPA and urges the Administration to work with Congress to pass implementing legislation as soon as possible.”

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The American Forest & Paper Association is the national trade association of the forest products industry, representing pulp, paper, packaging and wood products manufacturers, and forest landowners. Our companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources that sustain the environment. The forest products industry accounts for approximately 5 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP. Industry companies produce about \$175 billion in products annually and employ nearly 900,000 men and women, exceeding employment levels in the automotive, chemicals and plastics industries. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 47 states. Visit AF&PA online at www.afandpa.org.