

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 12, 2024

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
United States Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

The Honorable Robin Carnahan
Administrator
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20405

Dear Secretary Austin and Administrator Carnahan:

We write to encourage the Department of Defense (DoD) and General Services Administration (GSA) to expedite the transition to domestic Red Oak lumber for hardwood floorboards in U.S. military and other government vehicles, trailers and platforms, consistent with GSA's directive issued on November 27, 2023. Replacing critically endangered Apitong hardwood from tropical rainforests with a readily available, sustainable domestic source of lumber makes clear sense, and we urge you to make implementing this directive a priority.

U.S. Red Oak is a cost-effective, high-quality alternative for floorboard applications in U.S. military and other fleets that will benefit domestic manufacturing and the environment. GSA's Commercial Item Description for hardwood floorboards notes that use of foreign Apitong was unsustainable and counter to numerous U.S. Government regulatory and ethical commitments for responsible environmental stewardship in procurement. It was also not compliant with the Buy American Act of 1933 or Trade Agreements Act of 1979. By contrast, not only does the Northern Red Oak's new growth greatly exceed harvest throughout its native range, but also its domestic supply chain and transit produces less CO₂ emissions than that of the tropical Apitong.

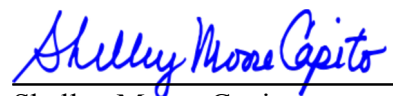
The United States should welcome and fully embrace this opportunity to support the domestic hardwood industry and protect fragile ecosystems. We strongly believe that the DoD and GSA should immediately identify all eligible production trailer models that currently specify or contain Apitong floorboards and prioritize the transition to utilize domestically grown and processed Red Oak lumber as defined by the new directive.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

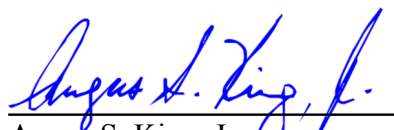
Sincerely,

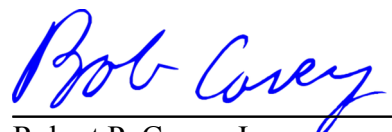



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