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September 18, 2017

Osama El-Lissy,
Deputy Administrator
USDA APHIS PPQ
Washington DC

Dear Osama,

In recent years, invasive plant pests have been detected in a variety of raw wood products from foreign sources, predominantly from Asian countries. Last year at the annual meeting of the National Plant Board (NPB), the members approved a resolution urging USDA APHIS PPQ (PPQ) to collaborate with the National Plant Board and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to address this problem.

Since then, USDA APHIS PPQ has undertaken a number of actions to minimize the risk of importation of invasive pests through this pathway. Included in those actions are:

- Revising the Miscellaneous and Processed Products Import Manual to improve the clarity of guidance tables and ensure permit language aligns specific regulatory requirements within the manual
- Developing a new FAQ website that includes the list of Approved Chinese Manufacturers
- Piloting a special operation between USDA APHIS PPQ and CBP at the Commercial Targeting and Analysis Center to target non-compliant products
- Communicating with China through USDA APHIS PPQ's Phytosanitary Issues Management regarding fraudulent phytosanitary certificates
- Developing an ePhyto system to reduce fraud with certificates

The National Plant Board membership appreciates these significant steps that you and your team are taking to safeguard our agricultural and natural resources from the threat of invasive plant pests through the raw wood pathway. We look forward to our continued partnership on this issue.

September 18, 2017
Raw Wood Products

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Ann Gibbs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann Gibbs, President
National Plant Board

CC:

Paula Henstridge, Assistant Deputy Administrator, USDA APHIS PPQ
Alan Dowdy, Associate Deputy Administrator, USDA APHIS PPQ
Matt Royer, Associate Deputy Administrator, USDA APHIS PPQ
Ron Sequeira, Associate Deputy Administrator, USDA APHIS PPQ
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