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## *Decorative Hardwoods Association®*

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February 29, 2024

The Hon. Cliff Bentz  
Chairman  
House Natural Resources Subcommittee,  
Water, Wildlife and Fisheries  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Jared Huffman  
Ranking Member  
House Natural Resources Subcommittee,  
Water, Wildlife and Fisheries  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bentz and Ranking Member Huffman:

The Decorative Hardwoods Association (DHA)<sup>1</sup> appreciates this opportunity to comment on H.R. 7157 the “Strengthen Wood Product Supply Chains Act.” Although we appreciate the authors desire to increase efficiency in the enforcement of the Lacey Act and other U.S. laws regulating imports, we oppose H.R. 7157 in its current form.

DHA represents North American manufacturers of hardwood plywood, hardwood veneer and engineered wood flooring. DHA has been a strong supporter of the Lacey Act and enforcement of US trade law. North American manufacturers of decorative hardwoods have been harmed by illegal imports of competing materials. Illegal imports are still a serious problem. For example, we were pleased to see the recent announcement from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida regarding the recent sentencing of Noel and Kelsy Hernandez Quintana to 57 months in prison for illegally importing and selling between \$25 million and \$65 million worth of plywood products in violation of the Lacey Act and customs laws.<sup>2</sup> This material was Chinese made hardwood plywood using Russian timber. DHA is concerned that some of the provisions of H.R. 7157 would undermine enforcement and make convictions of law breakers like the Quintanas more difficult.

In particular, we are concerned about the provision requiring within 10 days of detention, enforcing agencies must allow the importer to request detained merchandise be transported to a facility not under the control of the federal government. It is our understanding that scientific testing of samples for wood species typically takes 14 days. In addition, follow up testing can be required depending on initial testing results and/or based on information provided by importers upon request. It is important to note that wood testing is only one of several measures that are taken in order to examine whether laws have been broken. Thus, the 10-day limit would clearly undermine enforcement. We are also concerned that unscrupulous actors could alter illegal shipments once out of federal government control to evade law enforcement.

DHA supports increasing efficiency in enforcement of the Lacey Act and customs laws. Rather than change existing law, we support increased funding for agencies to properly enforce these laws and catch more illegal imports.

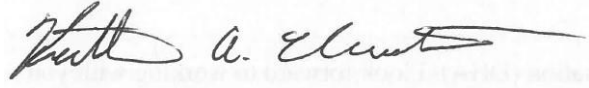
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<sup>1</sup> The Decorative Hardwoods Association represents over 75 North American manufactures of hardwood plywood, hardwood veneer, engineered wood floors and their suppliers and distributors.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdfl/pr/florida-conspirators-sentenced-nearly-five-years-prison-each-evading-over-42-million>

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on construction materials under the Act. If you have any questions, please contact me at [kchristman@decorativehardwoods.org](mailto:kchristman@decorativehardwoods.org) or 703-435-2900.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith A. Christman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Keith A. Christman  
President  
Decorative Hardwoods Association