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March 23, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor, State of Florida
Executive Office of the Governor
Plaza Level - 01
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

On behalf of all the members of the Florida Forestry Association, thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 outbreak. We know that you have had to make some tough calls and will continue to do so as the situation unfolds. We realize that you are weighing some serious considerations regarding a possible order to shelter in place and wanted to make sure that you are aware of federal guidance regarding forestry's designation as a critical industry.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has issued the "Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response" (March 19). **This guidance includes the forest industry in its list of critical industries that are recommended to remain operational in the event of any shelter in place order.** In such a situation, it would be critical to keep the full range of the industry operational. This includes but is not limited to our manufacturing assets (pulp/paper mills and sawmills, etc.); other integral parts of the forest products supply chain (logging and trucking forces, etc.); and other forestry professionals who maintain the industry's sustainability (forestry consultants, site prep contractors, etc.).

Our members wholeheartedly agree with this federal guidance deeming forestry an essential industry. Florida's forest industry boosts the state's economy by \$25 billion annually. It helps provide jobs to 124,000 Floridians. It is in fact the economic cornerstone of several of our rural counties. And it supplies Floridians with basic necessities that are crucial in these challenging times: paper masks and gowns; packaging for medical supplies; food and food distribution (carry-out containers, for example); pharmaceutical products, toilet paper, paper towels, diapers, lumber, and many, many more.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter, and thank you again for your leadership in dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak. Please do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of service.

Sincerely,

Alan Shelby
Executive Vice President