



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

November 16, 2020

Dear Chairman Hittle,

I seek the Wisconsin Council on Forestry's assistance to support an effort organized by the U.S. Economic Development Association (EDA) to develop a long-term, sustainable strategy for Wisconsin's forest products industry.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching impacts on Wisconsin's paper industry. While demand has increased in some sectors, it has also diminished substantially in others, resulting in the loss of hundreds of jobs at the Verso mill in Wisconsin Rapids, as well as additional economic displacement throughout our state's forest products industry. Impacts have been felt throughout components of the wood supply chain including mills producing other forest products, all of which affect our rural communities. While this industry plays a major role in our State's economy, it also is directly tied to our ability to sustainably manage our State's tremendous forest resources.

The U.S. Economic Development Association, through its Regional Economic Diversification Summits, provides federal resources enabling states to engage in a collaborative approach to sustainable regional development.

Given the Council's role as the preeminent statewide body representing the diverse interests of Wisconsin's forestry sector, I request that that the Council take the lead state role in partnership with the EDA to convene such a summit. Staff from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) stand ready to provide the Council with the administrative support needed for this critical endeavor.

Please feel free to contact my office or either of the agencies for additional support. On behalf of the people of Wisconsin, I thank you for taking on this responsibility.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers, Governor
State of Wisconsin