

April 21, 2026

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Subject: Request for Formal Consultation with Indigenous Nations of North America on the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

Your Excellencies,

As representatives of Indigenous Nations and Tribal organizations of North America, we are sovereign peoples who have served as stewards of our continent's forests for thousands of years. We are writing to share our concerns regarding the implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and its impact on Indigenous communities in North America, as well as **to propose targeted, practical solutions.**

Native American Tribes in the U.S. manage approximately **8 million hectares** of forestland across the United States. These forests are not merely economic resources. They are integral to our cultural identity, our spiritual practices, our sovereignty, and our communities' survival: **the sale of Tribal timber funds the essential services our people depend on, including education, healthcare, and law enforcement.** We have sustained our forests through generations, guided by Indigenous knowledge and science-based forest management planning, and they remain among the world's healthiest, most biodiverse forest ecosystems.

Indigenous Canadian First Nations manage approximately **17 million hectares** of forestland across Canada. About 50% of all Canadian forests are in the western province of British Columbia (BC), a volume equivalent of 8-12 million hectares. Presently, 95% of BC is regulated by a Crown land provincial government tenure system. These Crown tenures are legally bound by legislation consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that requires **shared decision making and consent-based decision making** between BC and First Nations.

To address chain of custody issues in the international marketplace, Canadian First Nations are researching the development of First Nations branding within certification bodies. This will support better traceability and verification of sustainably harvested forest products, identify Indigenous stewardship practices, and ensure consumers can confidently choose forest products that align with ethical, environmentally responsible, and culturally respectful sourcing.

We fully support the EU's objective of ending global deforestation. However, the EUDR was developed without **meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities in North America and creates significant challenges for Indigenous Forest management.** These issues can and must be corrected as part of the simplification review due 30 April 2026.

I. LACK OF CONSULTATION WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES MANAGING FORESTLAND

The EUDR was drafted, debated, and enacted without any formal dialogue with Indigenous forest-managing communities in North America. This is a matter of deep concern.

Our forests are governed by federally approved forest management plans that integrate Indigenous knowledge with modern forestry science. Timber harvested under these plans is legally authorized, sustainably managed, and demonstrably deforestation-free. Yet the regulation treats our timber no differently than wood sourced from regions with active and well-documented deforestation crises.

This is not only a practical failure – it is a legal one. The European Union is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which expressly requires the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous communities before the enactment of laws and measures that affect them. No meaningful consultation has been conducted with us.

The EUDR's preamble expresses an ambition to strengthen the rights of forest-dependent communities, including indigenous peoples. This ambition cannot be realized without engaging those same communities in the design and implementation of the regulation.

II. DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Despite the United States and Canada being designated as **low-risk countries** for deforestation under the EUDR, the regulation imposes complex and costly geolocation and traceability requirements on our supply chains. These requirements do not reflect how forestry operates in practice. The unintended consequences for low-risk supply chains, particularly for Indigenous and small landowners, are already evident yet remain unrecognized by the EU.

The geolocation requirements of the EUDR demand polygon-level data that reveals the precise location and extent of harvesting activities on Indigenous lands. Because operators in the upstream supply chain outside the EU cannot access the EU's IT system directly, we are forced to pass this sensitive information along the supply chain – with no protections governing who can access it, how it is stored, or how it may be used.

For Indigenous communities, plot-level geolocation requirements raise profound issues of sovereignty, cultural protection, and data security. **Indigenous communities will not share sensitive stand level geolocation information about their sovereign lands.** As a result, forest products from Indigenous lands risk being excluded from forest product supply chains

– not because they fail to meet sustainability standards, but because the regulation’s data requirements are incompatible with the exercise of Indigenous sovereignty.

The consequences of this exclusion are severe. Because Canadian First Nations and U.S. Tribes do not have a tax base, **forestry revenue sustains our community services, including our healthcare, our schools, and our law enforcement.** When Indigenous timber is sidelined from supply chains, our communities bear the cost. The EUDR, a regulation designed to protect forests and the communities that depend on them, is undermining both.

It is also essential to understand that the majority of **Indigenous timber is not exported directly to the European Union.** Canadian First Nations and U.S. Tribes sell their wood and fiber into local and domestic supply chains – to nearby sawmills, pulp manufacturers, and regional processors – who in turn produce goods that ultimately reach global markets, including the EU. In anticipation of EUDR enforcement, exporters of forest products – primarily large forest product manufacturers – are already restructuring their sourcing, increasingly purchasing from large landowners and mills, and vertically integrated companies that can more easily meet the Regulation’s geolocation and traceability requirements. By disrupting integrated supply chains, the EUDR is sidelining First Nations and Tribes, small landowners, and small local mills that buy our harvests. Even if the Regulation’s requirements were eased specifically for Indigenous timber, that relief would be of little practical value if our local mills have reduced capacity or closed, or if large manufacturers have already restructured their sourcing to avoid EUDR compliance risk. **Any reforms must account for the supply chains in which Canadian First Nations and U.S. Tribes operate, not just Indigenous timber in isolation.**

III. OUR REQUEST: FORMAL CONSULTATION AND TARGETED REFORM

We believe these impacts are significant oversights – the result of a complete lack of consultation with Indigenous forest-managing communities. We have practical solutions to offer, and we are asking for the opportunity to be heard.

We are compelled to note, however, that the Commission’s stated approach to the simplification review to date does not reflect the depth of examination these issues require. Targeted adjustments to narrow procedural burdens, while welcome, do not address the foundational shortcomings of the Regulation – including the complete absence of consultation with Indigenous communities whose forests and livelihoods are directly affected. A credible review must be objective, comprehensive, and willing to confront the law’s structural deficiencies, not only its administrative ones. Without that commitment, the review cannot genuinely ensure the Regulation achieves its intended purpose.

Specifically, we request the following as part of the simplification review in April 2026:

- 1. Formally recognize Indigenous forests as low-risk, legally protected systems.**
Our forests are managed under federally approved plans that require sustainability, legality, and ecological integrity. The EUDR should explicitly recognize existing governance frameworks.
- 2. Issue guidance confirming that timber harvested under approved Indigenous Forest management plans meets the EUDR’s due diligence requirements to prove legality and confirm that harvests are deforestation- and degradation-free.**
- 3. Amend the “plot of land” definition (Article 2, Item 27) to allow geolocation reporting at an appropriate and proportional scale for low-risk countries – such as Timber supply area (Canada) and county-level or supply-area reporting (U.S.) – rather than plot-level polygon data.** Industry estimates indicate that county-level reporting would require 150

to 300 times less data while still providing competent authorities with meaningful insight into local forest conditions. This would allow for shared resources to be developed, which is appropriate for low-risk contexts like North America and would support Indigenous Nations and small landowners alike.

4. Establish a formal, solutions-focused dialogue between the European Commission and Indigenous forest-managing communities, including Native American Tribes, First Nations of Canada, and, where appropriate, other Indigenous peoples whose forests supply global markets affected by the EUDR.

These reforms would honour Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and stewardship. They would recognize management practices rooted in thousands of years of Indigenous knowledge. They would ensure that Indigenous communities can continue to participate in integrated forest-product supply chains and access global markets, thereby sustaining Indigenous self-sufficiency and community services. And they would align the EUDR with its own stated ambition to strengthen the rights of forest-dependent communities, including indigenous peoples.

Madam President von der Leyen, Executive Vice-President Ribera, we write not in opposition to the EUDR, but in the conviction that it can be made stronger. The world's forests will not be saved by regulations that exclude the people who know them best. We have been stewards of these lands since time immemorial. We stand ready to engage constructively and to contribute the perspective that has been missing from this process.

Yours sincerely,



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