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June 20, 1975

Dear Pete:

Just a short note to include with the attached letter from Senator Bill Brock which I am returning to you.

I want to thank you again for all your help and assistance. It certainly was good to see you again!

Warmest personal regards,

Mr. Peter Secchia
Universal Forest Products, Inc.
3153 Three Mile Road, N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

GRF:Downton

cc: Special Files

Enclosure: (copy of letter attached)

file in Central Files Confidential.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

D/Make copy + return
this to Pete Seschia.
Thank him for all his
help. Good to see him.
Then give copy of this
letter to Jim Cannon for
"info"; no action.

BILL BROCK
TENNESSEE

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, HOUSING AND
URBAN AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 17, 1975

Mr. Peter Secchia
Universal Forest Products, Inc.
3153 Three Mile Road, N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

Dear Pete:

I enjoyed the brief visit on the phone today. I'm enclosing, as I said, the brief summary of the Committee's Executive session on March 13th which related to tax credit for mobile homes.

We also discussed the Consumer Protection Bill. I have greatly mixed emotions about it, as I said. In the first instance, the Committee did approve and the Senate accepted as well my cost benefit section which will require all agencies both independent and executive to implement something the President very strongly sought last October, to wit an evaluation of the inflationary effect of governmental regulations, laws or policies.

My bill requires that each agency determine the cost, and by that I mean the true cost to the consumer, and the proposed benefits of any new regulations, publish that statement in the Federal Register prior to the implementation of the regulation and allow hearings to be held on it so that we could, for the first time, demonstrate whether or not the benefits outweigh the ultimate consumer costs. If this is ever done, it could be one of the most fundamental changes in the process of government to be undertaken in this century.

For the life of me, I can't understand those who say the government should not be required to justify its own actions. There is no industry or group of industries which has had more effect in creating our economic difficulties, inflation, recession, unemployment and the like than the Federal Government itself. It's time we pin-pointed the root cause of our problem. Thus, I consider this to be a major plus for the bill, which it did not have last year.

From an entirely different point of view, I also question whether or not it might be wise to sign this bill despite its obvious shortcomings. If the President vetoes the bill, the odds are at least 50-50 that he will be overridden. If he is not, then I am quite confident that the Congress will proceed to rewrite the legislation either later this year or early next year, and in the heat of a campaign year, the bill will probably be much worse than that which we now have. Even if we were to forestall any action until 1977, this concept will be pursued by its advocates until it is law. I fear the longer we wait the greater the potential for really bad legislation.

Even more fundamentally, if the President were to sign this bill, he then would have the opportunity to appoint the Administrator, and have him confirmed by a Congress which was grateful for his acceptance of the fait accompli. Thus, he would have a better opportunity to put in that job someone who was rational and competent, and someone who understood the workings of the marketplace. In the ensuing 12 to 18 months that Administrator would proceed to staff this agency from the lowest civil service position up to the top with people who at least had some modicum of understanding of the free market system.

I guess what I'm saying is that I fear the alternatives. If for some unforeseen reason the President should not determine to run again, and his successor were a Democrat, then not only will we have much worse legislation enacted, but probably dedicated anti-free enterprise types running this agency and using it to debilitate even more the opportunity for the competitive system to maintain itself and to continue to serve the consumers of the United States.

On the contrary, should the President sign the bill and appoint a good administrator now, such an eventuality would be precluded by the fact that the agency would be peopled by competent people in the interim between now and 1977, most of whom would remain under any ensuing administration.

At any rate, these are some of the thoughts I've had in support of signing the bill. There are obviously equally valid arguments on the other side, which I don't need to repeat because they are well known. Let me know what you think, and what I can do to help. Hope to see you soon. Take care.

Very truly yours,



BILL BROCK

BB:cb