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J. Randy Forbes
United States Congress

4th District, Virginia

October 28, 2009

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John R. Fernandez
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Fernandez:

I am writing on behalf of more than 1,100 employees of the International Paper Co. sawmill and paper mill in Southeastern Virginia who have recently lost their jobs or are scheduled to lose them in the near future.

The closure of the mills is a devastating blow to the surrounding community and the Commonwealth of Virginia. During this uncertain time of transition for individuals and families, it is of the utmost importance that the federal government steps forward to ensure appropriate services and benefits are timely provided. To that end, I would like to request that you or an appropriate representative join me in the coming weeks in the City of Franklin, Isle of Wight, and Southampton counties for an economic development forum on the specific ways the Economic Development Administration can support the community during this challenging time of transition.

As they have done for years in the past, these communities will pull together to renew their economy. The families you will meet here are proud, hard-working people. I am confident that the EDA's guidance and resources in cooperation with the efforts of federal, state, and local leaders will help the City of Franklin, Isle of Wight, and Southampton counties towards a brighter future.

I would appreciate if you would contact me or Ryan Kaldahl from my staff at (202) 225-6365 / ryan.kaldahl@mail.house.gov at your earliest convenience regarding this request. Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you. With kind personal regards, I am

Yours Truly,

J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress