

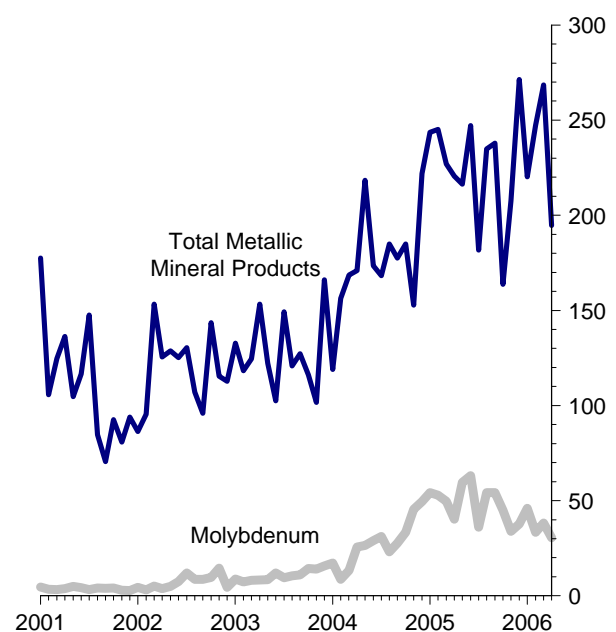
## Exports ♦ April 2006

- The value of BC origin exports was 8.0% higher in the first four months of 2006 compared to the January to April period in 2005. A 37.7% hike in exports of energy products was responsible for much of the increase.
- The jump in energy exports was driven mainly by price inflation. For example, quantities of natural gas exports climbed only 2.1%, while the value of exports was up 34.0%. For shipments of coal, price inflation was entirely responsible for the growth (+50.4%) as the quantity exported actually fell. Electricity exports went against the overall trend in the energy sector, slumping 49.6% over the first four months of 2006.
- Exports of machinery and equipment surged 14.7% in the January to April period, despite a 1.5% dip in shipments of motor vehicles and parts. Exports of electrical, electronic and communications equipment soared 20.9%, while shipments of other machinery and equipment grew 16.1% to offset the drop in exports of motor vehicles and parts.
- Pulp and paper shipments were 4.7% lower than a year earlier. Newsprint exports suffered the largest decline, at 8.0%. Elsewhere in the forest sector, shipments of solid wood products edged up 1.4% despite a 0.4% drop in shipments of softwood lumber, which comprises about two-thirds of solid wood product exports. The decline was due to falling prices as quantities

of lumber shipped actually climbed 10.9%.

- Exports of metallic mineral products slumped 11.7% in April, such that year-to-date exports are 0.6% lower than the same period last year. All the major metals contributed to the April slump, but molybdenum ores and concentrates are the only major metallic mineral export with lower year-to-date totals (-24.9%).
- Exports of agriculture and food other than fish are down 12.9% year-to-date, mostly due to a 25.8% decline in international shipments of vegetables, although exports of fruits and nuts (-8.5%) and other agriculture and food products (-11.1%) have also fallen.

*An April slump has driven year-to-date exports of metallic mineral products below last year's levels, led by declining shipments of molybdenum*



## SEASONALLY ADJUSTED EXPORTS

*Exports (adjusted for seasonality)  
dropped in April*

Seasonal adjustment supplies a means of making month-to-month comparisons by removing the regular periodic seasonal fluctuations that occur. Variations from normal seasonal patterns are revealed in the seasonally adjusted data series.

- Total exports fell 5.8% in April as most of the major commodity groups, with the exception of energy (+1.2%), saw a drop in international shipments. Machinery, equipment and automobiles experienced the largest decline (-14.9%), followed by industrial and consumer goods (-10.6%).
- Exports to the US slipped 2.7% in April. Similar to total exports, only energy products saw an increase in exports (+6.7%).



## BC Exports, Seasonally Adjusted (\$Millions)

Month	Agriculture & Fish	Energy	Forest Products	Machinery & Equip, Auto	Industrial, Consumer	Total	Exports to USA
Apr 2004	192	351	1,193	319	499	2,554	1,664
May	197	447	1,340	340	542	2,864	1,776
Jun	198	390	1,309	345	484	2,726	1,795
Jul	206	390	1,278	354	499	2,727	1,774
Aug	187	379	1,275	341	518	2,700	1,765
Sep	200	304	1,266	340	489	2,598	1,724
Oct	208	340	1,183	340	514	2,585	1,658
Nov	195	415	1,112	339	486	2,547	1,659
Dec	184	440	1,119	326	506	2,574	1,663
Jan 2005	191	457	1,115	334	569	2,667	1,673
Feb	185	439	1,176	340	544	2,684	1,758
Mar	181	469	1,117	336	516	2,618	1,743
Apr	188	515	1,122	359	522	2,705	1,772
May	187	551	1,124	357	542	2,761	1,741
Jun	207	625	1,108	360	575	2,874	1,787
Jul	176	692	994	357	483	2,703	1,821
Aug	202	808	1,070	363	530	2,973	1,849
Sep	196	799	1,048	364	577	2,984	1,855
Oct	200	847	1,123	374	536	3,080	2,026
Nov	207	688	1,120	376	582	2,973	1,986
Dec	201	884	1,182	390	596	3,254	2,071
Jan 2006	197	725	1,176	365	543	3,007	1,996
Feb	194	575	1,116	373	527	2,785	1,767
Mar	195	644	1,122	429	556	2,946	1,866
Apr	186	652	1,074	365	497	2,774	1,815

## Deal or No Deal for Softwood Lumber?

After five long years, the dispute between Canada and the United States over softwood lumber has finally been resolved...or has it? Although the federal government announced in April that an agreement has been reached that would end the long-running trade spat, there has been significant opposition expressed from some sectors of the Canadian lumber industry, as well as some other stakeholders.

*The softwood lumber dispute may be coming to an end...or not*

The tentative agreement would result in an immediate end to duties imposed on shipments of Canadian softwood lumber to the United States, with the return of all but US \$1 billion of the approximately US \$5 billion in duties already paid out by Canadian lumber companies. Under the agreement, border measures that would be implemented include: an export measure comprised of either an export tax or a combination of an export tax and a volume restraint; a third country trigger that could reduce export taxes; and a surge mechanism that could increase taxes.<sup>1</sup> Other aspects of the deal include an obligation on the part of both countries to end all litigation with respect to softwood lumber and an attempt to establish “policy exits” within 18 months of entry into force of the agreement.

*The deal would end duties on softwood lumber and return billions of dollars to Canada*

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<sup>1</sup> The export measure would consist either of an export charge or an export charge plus volume restraint, both of which would vary with the price of lumber:

<b>Price per 1,000 board feet</b>	<b>Option A – Export Charge</b>	<b>Option B – Export Charge plus Volume Restraint</b>
Over US \$355	0%	0
US \$336-355	5%	2.5% + regional share of 34% of US consumption
US \$316-335	10%	3% + regional share of 32% of US consumption
US \$315 and under	15%	5% + regional share of 30% of US consumption

Note: the regional share is based on the average share of exports to the US from 2001 to 2005.

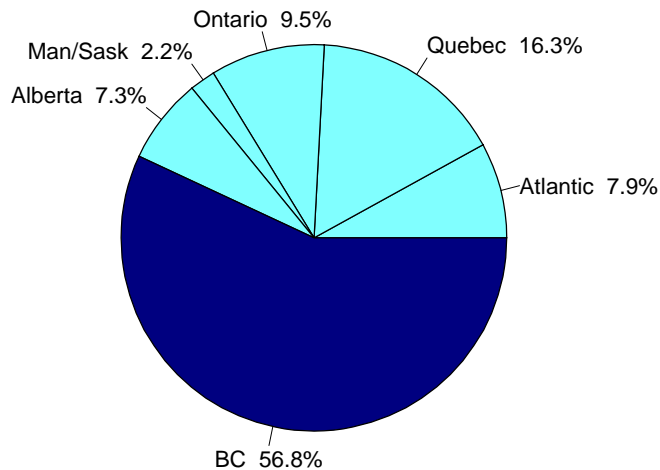
The third country trigger specifies that if, for two consecutive quarters, Canada’s market share falls at the same time that US domestic producers’ market share increases and the third country share of US lumber increases by 20% over the same quarters in the previous year, export charges paid in those quarters will be refunded.

The surge mechanism is triggered when a region’s exports are greater than 110% of its allocated share in any period and would result in an export charge of 150% of the normal charge if the difference in volume is greater than 1%. If it is within 1%, the trigger volume for the next period would be reduced by the overage.

Source: International Trade Canada. “Basic Terms of a Canada-United States Agreement on Softwood Lumber.” Available at: [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/eicb/softwood/basic-terms-en.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/eicb/softwood/basic-terms-en.asp)

Lumber companies operating in British Columbia have the largest stake in any potential agreement since BC is the origin of well over half of the Canadian softwood lumber exported to the US and they have paid out the majority of the duties.

**BC was the origin of well over half of the softwood lumber exported to the US in 2005**



Source: Statistics Canada

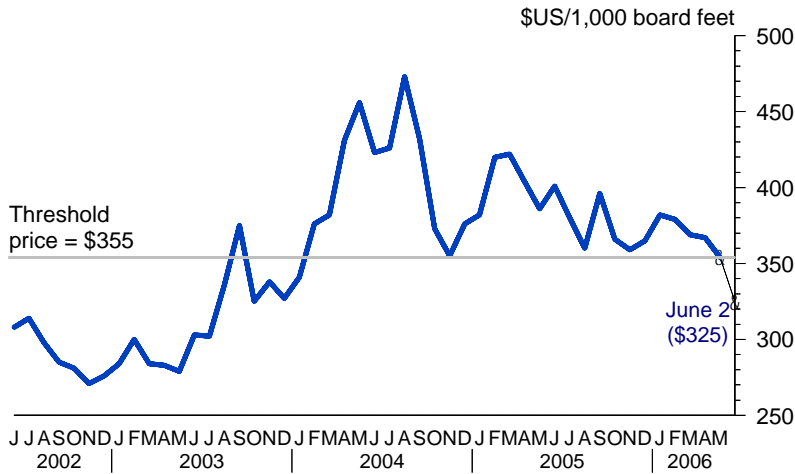
*BC has the largest stake in any potential agreement with over half the lumber imported from Canada into the US originating in BC*

So far the deal in principle has the endorsement of the provincial government, but not all of those within the industry are on side and even those in the forest industry that have expressed support for the agreement have done so tentatively. Some of those in favour of the agreement, including International Trade Minister David Emerson, have suggested that opponents of the tentative deal are looking for a perfect agreement that will never be reached. Reaching agreement on a deal will involve compromise and there will be both pros and cons to any agreement that is reached. What the stakeholders in the dispute would like to ensure is that the pros outweigh the cons.

One of the positive aspects of the agreement is that the duties will be revoked once the deal is signed. Currently, companies are paying duties, on average, of just under 11% on lumber exports to the US. As proponents of the agreement indicated, with the lumber composite price at the level it was on the day the agreement was reached, there would essentially be free trade in lumber between Canada and the United States with no limits to how much lumber could be shipped south of the border and no duties or taxes payable. However, since that day lumber prices have slumped, such that at June 2 the composite price was \$325 per thousand board feet. At this price, companies would have to pay a 10% export tax with no volume restraint under Option A, or a 3% tax combined with a volume restraint under Option B. Option A would be similar to the situation that exists now without an agreement.

*One positive aspect of the tentative deal is that duties will be revoked*

The Random Lengths framing lumber composite monthly average price was at or above \$355 from February 2004 to April 2005

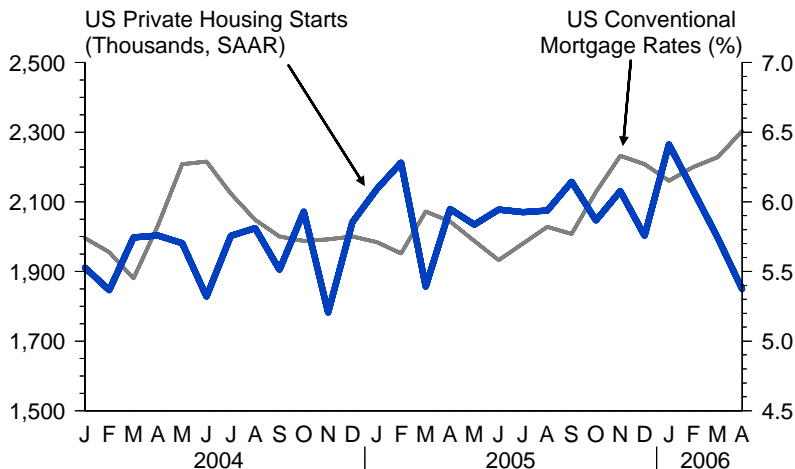


Source: Random Lengths

*Prices for lumber have recently fallen below the threshold at which export taxes will kick in*

Opponents of the deal have expressed concern that lumber prices are likely to drop even further over the next several months as demand for housing in the United States wanes. Mortgage rates are rising, which is having a dampening effect on the demand for housing and, subsequently, construction of new housing is starting to fall off. Private housing starts in the United States slumped from a peak of 2.27 million in January (seasonally adjusted at annual rates) to 1.85 million by April, the lowest level in over a year.<sup>2</sup>

Mortgage rates in the US are on the way up and housing starts are starting to fall



Sources: Starts - US Dept. of Commerce; Mortgage rates - US Federal Reserve

*With mortgage rates in the US rising and housing starts falling, lumber prices could drop further*

<sup>2</sup> Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM database (data obtained from US Department of Commerce).

Most economic forecasts predict that US housing starts will be well down from 2005 levels, so it appears unlikely that starts will rebound significantly later in the year.<sup>3</sup> This does not bode well for the price of softwood lumber, which means that border measures outlined in the agreement will almost certainly kick in within the next few months. With the pine beetle infestation in British Columbia and the resulting need to deal with a surfeit of beetle-damaged lumber, volume restraints and/or surge mechanisms are also a strong possibility.

Despite the risk of some form of border measure, some stakeholders may still find the agreement preferable to the status quo. For one thing, the export taxes would be collected by the Canadian government and kept in Canada, with no possibility of being used to subsidize American competitors. Another positive aspect of the deal is that it provides certainty to Canadian lumber companies both in terms of access to the US market, as well as in knowing that they will not have to engage in a protracted legal battle. The American government has shown very little hesitation in making attempts at bypassing decisions from both NAFTA and WTO panels, using sometimes questionable methodology to ensure that duties remain on Canadian softwood lumber. While Canada's chances of a legal win are good, litigation is always uncertain and the time and effort it takes to achieve a victory could be too costly for some in the industry and could further erode Canada's relationship with the United States.

In addition to providing certainty for lumber producers and starting on the road toward repairing the rifts between the two countries, there is the not so small matter of the return of at least US \$4 billion to Canadian lumber manufacturers. This money could be used to help make Canadian companies more productive or to weather the storm when lumber prices are low. On the other hand, the agreement calls for US \$1 billion to remain in the US, half of which would be distributed directly to the companies that launched the complaint against Canadian lumber in the first place. Considering that a NAFTA panel found that there was no justification for the duties, this provision has raised some objections.

Another contentious part of the agreement is that any forest policy changes that provincial governments wish to make relating to issues such as stumpage could be challenged by the US government. On the other hand, there is the possibility that BC or any other province could make a forest policy change that would exempt that province from export restrictions. The outline of the agreement states that, "Canada, with full participation of the

*The deal will return at least US \$4 billion to Canadian lumber companies, but US \$1 billion would remain in the US*

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the Economic Forecast Council offered an average forecast of a drop from 2.05 million housing starts in 2005 to 1.87 million in 2006, with a range of between 1.79 and 1.92 million starts. See: [www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2006/bfp/TheEconomicForecastCouncil,20069.htm](http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2006/bfp/TheEconomicForecastCouncil,20069.htm)

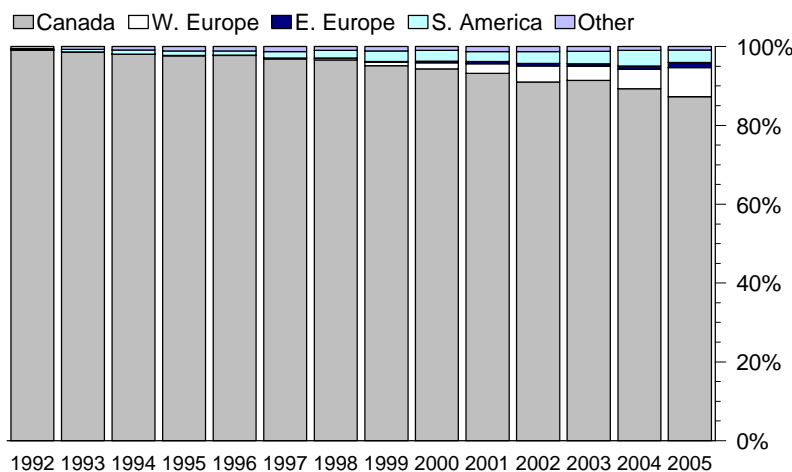
provinces, and the US will make best efforts to define ‘policy exits’ from the export measure for each province with 18 months of entry into force of this agreement.”<sup>4</sup> However, there is no guarantee that “best efforts” will result in a mutually acceptable agreement on policy exits and the fact that these exits are not already stipulated in the agreement creates some uncertainty for provincial governments looking to achieve free trade in lumber.

*The outline of the agreement mentions “policy exits”; however, they are yet to be defined*

There are other pros and cons to consider, but no matter which side of the ledger it falls on for the lumber industry, there is one interested party that is almost certain to come out on the short end of the two-by-four if this agreement is ratified, and that is the consumer, because prices for lumber will almost certainly be higher than they would be if there were free trade in lumber. One of the more vocal opponents of the agreement is the executive vice president of the US National Association of Home Builders, Jerry Howard, who believes the deal “would provide a massive subsidy to the US timber industry at the expense of millions of American consumers.”<sup>5</sup> Howard was expressing concerns about a possible deal even before an agreement was reached, suggesting that American home builders would look to European and Russian sources for lumber if Canada accepted an agreement that contained quotas or export taxes.

*The US National Association of Home Builders is opposed to the agreement*

Although Canada is still the primary source of lumber imported into the US, Canada’s market share has been slipping



*Canada’s share of US imports of softwood lumber has been falling*

Source: US Department of Commerce

Based on import data from the US Department of Commerce, it appears that Canada’s share of US imports of lumber has already been falling over the last decade. In 1992, Canadian lumber comprised 99.1% of American softwood lumber imports, but by 2005, Canada’s share had slipped to 87.3%, while South America and

<sup>4</sup> International Trade Canada. “Basic Terms of a Canada-United States Agreement on Softwood Lumber.”

<sup>5</sup> As quoted in: Crutsinger, Martin. “US, Canada Make Softwood Lumber Deal,” *Washington Post*, April 28, 2006 (www.washingtonpost.com).

Western Europe, in particular, have made significant inroads into the US market.

There are many issues for the lumber industry to consider before deciding whether or not this agreement has more benefits than costs and in the end, each individual company will have to decide what is best for them. However, given the downward trend of lumber prices, this agreement could prove to be a tough sell to those in the forest industry, and even if the forest companies come on side, there is still the possibility that the federal legislation necessary to put the agreement into force could be defeated given the fact that there is currently a minority government in Ottawa.

There are also other emerging issues that could cause the deal to unravel. There has been some negative industry reaction to an American draft of the agreement. John Allan, president of the BC Lumber Trade Council was quoted as saying "What we are seeing in the American draft is not acceptable."<sup>6</sup> The objections centre on a few clauses in particular. In the preamble of the American draft, there is an explicit statement that Canadian lumber was dumped, subsidized and threatened injury to American lumber producers, despite the fact that NAFTA has ruled otherwise. There has also been concern expressed from remanufacturers about the language used to impose conditions on the industry that could result in most of them being subject to having their goods taxed on the price of their finished products, rather than the price of the lumber inputs. Of concern for BC, in particular, is an anti-circumvention clause that some fear could halt BC's efforts to bring in a market-based timber pricing system.

In order to protect their interests, several Canadian forest companies are filing lawsuits with the US Court of International Trade. These companies would be required to drop these lawsuits under the terms of the agreement, which could indicate that they are filing the suits in order to give them leverage if they don't like the terms of the final draft. With all these uncertainties brewing, it is impossible to say at this point whether or not this agreement will signify an end to the dispute.

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<sup>6</sup> As quoted in: Hamilton, Gordon. "Softwood draft 'not acceptable,'" *Vancouver Sun*, June 1, 2006, p. C1.



**Recent Feature Articles in British Columbia Origin Exports Release  
Listed By Statistical Reference Date of Issue**

<b>06-04</b>	<i>Deal or No Deal for Softwood Lumber?</i> (released June 2006)	<b>05-01</b>	<i>Commodity Prices, Exchange Rates and Exports</i> (released March 2005)
<b>06-03</b>	<i>Will Canada-India Trade Spice Up?</i> (released May 2006)	<b>04-12</b>	<i>The Internet Pharmacy Debate</i> (released February 2005)
<b>06-02</b>	<i>Log Exports Becoming More of a Private Affair</i> (released April 2006)	<b>04-11</b>	<i>Canada's Trade With China</i> (released January 2005)
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## NOTES

**Countries Included Within World****Regions:**

**(1) Western Europe:** United Kingdom, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

**(2) Eastern Europe:** other Europe, including all of Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, etc.

**(3) South East Asia:** Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Myanmar, Kampuchea, Laos, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.

**(4) Africa:** continental Africa, excluding Ethiopia, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt.

**(5) South America:** continental South America from Colombia and Venezuela south to Chile and Argentina, including offshore islands, but not Caribbean.

**(6) Central America and Caribbean:** from Guatemala and Belize to Panama, plus Caribbean Islands.

**(7) Pacific Rim (including Japan):** Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Laos, Mongolia, China, Indonesia, North Korea, South Korea, Philippines, Macau, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand.

**(8) Pacific Rim:** as above, but excluding Japan.

**(9) Middle East:** from Turkey and Iran south through the Arabian Peninsula. Excluding Afghanistan and Pakistan, but including Cyprus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan and Libya.

The **European Union** is the membership as of May 1, 2004: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta,

Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

**'Selected Value-added Wood Products'** category includes prefabricated houses, doors, windows, furniture, moulding, siding, etc. It does not include panel products, shakes, shingles or any pulp and paper products.

**Revisions**

Statistics Canada revises trade data for the previous three data years with release of the December data. The revision number is indicated in the footer of the tables (e.g., Rev 1 is the first annual revision, etc., and Prelim indicates it is the first release of data to December for that year). In addition to annual revisions, Statistics Canada revises the data for the previous data year every quarter (indicated in the footer by Rev Q1, etc).

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