

Dear Ted Decker,

We, the undersigned Georgia business owners, organizations and leaders, are writing to ask that you join us as a partner in protecting forests and combating climate change. The two go hand in hand; letting trees grow is one of the best tools to address climate change.

In Georgia, the effects of climate change are expected to grow more severe. By 2050, coastal flooding will threaten over 130,000 people as the sea level continues to rise by 1 inch per decade. The amount of dangerously hot days will quadruple. Greater and more frequent heat will contribute to smog, exacerbating asthma and other heart and lung diseases. Georgia's agricultural industry will suffer — crops will need more water to handle the heat, but droughts will become more frequent. Heat stress can disrupt livestock's metabolism and productivity, and because peaches need cooler temperatures to grow, even Georgia's iconic fruit industry will be existentially threatened by 2100.

As the impacts of climate change in Georgia worsen, we must use every tool available to us to quickly reduce carbon emissions. Our forests are one of our greatest tools, and one of the most effective forests for carbon dioxide absorption and storage is the boreal forest in Canada — the largest remaining unlogged forest on the planet.

The Canadian boreal forest stores more than 200 billion tonnes of carbon, making it the most carbon dense terrestrial ecosystem on Earth. Unfortunately, one million acres of the forest are clear cut every year to produce softwood lumber, wood pulp and other products. Clear cutting the boreal removes carbon-absorbing trees and releases an average of 26 million tons of carbon dioxide per year. Even when new trees are planted over clear-cut forests, more carbon is released than absorbed for an average of 10 years after the clear-cut.

The Home Depot is the world's largest home improvement retailer and a significant buyer of wood from all across the globe, including from the boreal forest. As a Georgia company, we hope that The Home Depot will help combat climate change. Specifically we ask that The Home Depot:

1. Reduce the amount of wood sourced from forests by selling more reclaimed wood and wood-alternatives and ensure that the forests The Home Depot's suppliers source from are managed sustainably.
2. Establish policies that define and protect the rights of local communities, including Indigenous Peoples, which use or rely on forests logged by The Home Depot's suppliers. These communities are necessarily invested in the long-term sustainability of the forest.
3. Implement policies that protect biodiversity and take steps to reduce The Home Depot's impact on the climate.

By protecting forests and our climate, The Home Depot can positively impact the future of Georgia. We urge you to take steps now to champion forest protection and climate action.

Sincerely,