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## **#ForestProud**

October 16-22, 2016, Florida celebrates Working Forests Week in recognition of the importance of our state's working forests.

As a (insert your role in the forest industry), I am proud to be part of the forest industry. (Elaborate on your role/history if desired.) Florida is usually associated with beaches, palm trees and Mickey Mouse, but forestry has a rich heritage in our state and continues to play a key role in our state's economy and environment.

I am proud to be part of an industry that is important to our economy. According to a report by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), forestry and forest products are the top agricultural commodity and the leading agricultural export. The Florida Forest Service (FFS) reports that forestry has a \$16.1 billion impact on the state's economy. Statewide, the forest industry provides jobs for almost 78,000 of our family, friends and neighbors. In North Florida especially, the forest industry is the backbone of many counties and communities.

I am proud to be part of an industry that yields so many benefits to our environment. Forests provide a natural solution to the issues of water quality and quantity that Florida now faces. They remain an important tool for carbon sequestration. In a state experiencing constant development, they offer much-needed green spaces that are not only beautiful but that also offer habitat to an amazing diversity of wildlife.

I am proud to be part of an industry that is part of almost everything we do. At last count, more than 5,000 items contained forest products. The assortment of "Goods from the Woods" is very diverse and continues to grow. For example, the materials working forests provide are used to build our homes, print our newspapers, landscape our yards and manufacture our furniture. Forest products are also found in the screens on our cell phones, televisions and computers; in our shampoos and other cosmetics; and in medicines, sports equipment, food and much more!

This week, I hope you will pay more attention to the ways that working forests impact you and our community. Show your support by using forest products to keep the market for trees strong. Economically solid; environmentally friendly: I am #ForestProud.

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