



For immediate release: June 12, 2008

## **Environmental and Industry Groups Join to Commend New U.S. Ban on Illegal Wood Imports.**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The United States has taken the critical step of passing legislation banning the import, sale or trade of illegally-harvested wood and forest products. The new U.S. benchmark measure will be key in addressing this far-reaching problem.

The U.S. Congress amended the U.S. Lacey Act, a long-standing wildlife trafficking statute, to include trade in products made from illegally harvested wood. Environmentalists and industry organizations hailed these provisions as a groundbreaking piece of forest legislation.

The language has been championed by Congressman Earl Blumenauer and Senator Ron Wyden, both of Oregon, as well as the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and the House Natural Resources Committee. It received strong bi-partisan support in both chambers of Congress. The move is supported by a diverse coalition united against the effects of illegal logging on forests and communities in developing countries, the impacts it has on law-abiding forestry operations and jobs in the U.S., and the global climate.

Deforestation is estimated to cause close to 20% of annual greenhouse gas emissions. Illegal logging is one significant driver of the problem, setting in motion a chain of forest disturbance, clearing, and conversion.

“This important illegal logging provision will level the playing field that is currently stacked against U.S. forest product manufacturers who are committed to trading in legal forest products,” said AF&PA President & CEO Donna Harman. “Illegal logging costs the American forest products industry an estimated \$460 million each year in lost export sales, and AF&PA and a broad coalition of industry, environmental groups, and organized labor strongly support these measures. Thanks to the leadership of Rep. Blumenauer and Sen. Wyden, there now exists a law that will protect legitimate forest operations, and at the same time safeguard protected habitats worldwide.”

“The world’s biggest consumer nation has sent a message that will be heard by everyone from multinational CEOs to timber smugglers to communities struggling to protect their forests: the United States’ doors are now closed to products made from illegal wood,” said Alexander von Bismarck, Executive Director of the Environmental Investigation Agency. “This step represents the opportunity of a life-time to protect dwindling forests around the world, help the people and species which depend on them, and protect our global climate. It is now critical that other consuming nations in Europe and elsewhere quickly follow suit.”

“This legislation was designed to protect forests worldwide from deforestation and to prevent illegal wood products from entering into the United States which undermine the competitiveness of legally harvested and traded forest product” said Deb Hawkinson, Executive Director of the Hardwood Federation. “Passage of the Lacey Act provides a fair and equitable approach that other countries can adopt to stop international trade in illegal wood products.”

“Illegal logging damages both the environment and the domestic hardwood industry,” said Mark Barford, Executive Director of the National Hardwood Lumber Association. “The North American hardwood industry has developed modern forest management practices focused on sustainability, and passage of this legislation will allow the industry a level playing field.”

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