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FURNITURE, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS MUST NOW DECLARE BASIC INFORMATION UNDER US LACEY ACT

Washington DC – April 1, 2010 marks the beginning of enforcement for basic information transparency requirements under the Lacey Act for guitars, revolvers, hand tools, pool cues and certain types of furniture. The US Lacey Act, amended in May 2008, makes it a federal crime to trade in illegal wood products. Under a phased-in process, many sectors also have to declare the scientific name and the country of harvest for any plant constituents of their imported products.

Other wood product sectors, including those importing sawn timber, flooring, plywood, and caskets, have been declaring this information to the US government for nearly a year in some cases. Now, an importer of chairs manufactured in Vietnam will declare, for example, that the wooden frame is made of teak (*Tectona grandis*) from Thailand. Importers of billiards equipment might declare that the cocobolo in pool cues (*Dalbergia retusa*) is from Nicaragua.

This information--collected by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)--will allow the implementing agencies to target enforcement actions and better understand how the US market demand for wood products is affecting forests worldwide. For a full list of sectors included in the April 1 phase-in, visit the APHIS website (www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/lacey_act/index.shtml).
"The declaration requirement of the Lacey Act is a critically important part of achieving greater supply chain transparency and legality, the over-arching goals set forth by Lacey, " said Alexander von Bismarck of the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA). "For the first time, companies are required by law to ask basic questions about their supply chains and understand exactly where their wood comes from."

Full enforcement of the ban on trade in illegal wood has been in effect since the law passed on May 22, 2008. The first public enforcement action occurred in November 2009 when the government raided Gibson Guitar facilities in Nashville.

"Companies are really starting to wake up to the intent and value of this law," said von Bismarck, noting that awareness levels appear to be significantly higher among sectors submitting declarations.

The declaration form can be found on the APHIS website. Importers must print and mail it to APHIS *or* submit the information electronically via an automated broker interface. It is expected that an electronic interface will become publically available in the future as the US government continues to refine its implementation of the Lacey Act.

For information on the Lacey Act and illegal logging, visit www.eia-global.org/lacey.