environmental **investigation** agency

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United States Senate Passes Ban on the Import of Illegal Wood

WASHINGTON, DC – The Senate today passed ground-breaking legislation to stop the import of illegally logged timber and wood products as part of the Farm Bill.

Currently, the U.S. government has no authority to take enforcement action against the import of illegally logged wood products. Since early 2007, the U.S. Congress has moved to take action to stop the impact of U.S. demand on illegal logging around the world.

In July, Senator Wyden and Senator Alexander introduced the Combat Illegal Logging Act.

"EIA would like to commend Senator Wyden for his leadership in combating illegal logging," said Alexander von Bismarck, executive director of the Environmental Investigation Agency.

Previously, in March 2007, Congressmen Blumenauer (D-OR), Weller (R-IL), and Wexler (D-FL) introduced the bipartisan Legal Timber Protection Act, which was unanimously passed by the House Committee on Natural Resources last month and awaits approval by the full House of Representatives.

EIA has been working with a broad coalition of environmental, labor, and industry groups, including the American Forest & Paper Association and the Hardwood Federation, to find innovative solutions to the global problem of illegal logging.

In a report published in November called "*No Questions Asked*," EIA estimated that approximately 10% of U.S. wood product annual imports, or $3.8 billion dollars, are derived from illegally logged timber. It also found that despite an express ban on Indonesian sawn timber exports, 1,570 such shipments entered the U.S. over a two year span ending November 2006 – equal to more than 2 shipments per day.

On December 12th, an EIA report called "*Attention Wal-Mart Shoppers*" revealed undercover evidence collected in China of Wal-Mart's high risk of selling products made of illegal timber.

von Bismarck added: "The U.S.'s actions will have important impacts on consuming markets worldwide, as they're being watched in the European Union and other consuming countries where similar legislation is being considered."