



PRESS RELEASE

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Environmental Investigation Agency Applauds U.S. Congress for Passing World's First Ban on Import of Illegally Logged Wood

WASHINGTON, DC – The United States Congress today passed landmark legislation to address the global illegal logging crisis. The U.S. is the first country in the world to prohibit the import of illegally-harvested wood and wood products.

The legislation amends the Lacey Act, a long-standing wildlife trafficking statute, to ban the commerce of illegally-sourced plants, including wood products. The amendment was included in the farm bill, which passed the Senate today by a veto-proof margin of 81-15. The farm bill passed the House yesterday, also with a veto-proof majority.

“The passage of this law marks a new phase in the global fight to transform the timber trade,” said Alexander von Bismarck, Executive Director of the **Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)**, which spearheaded the coalition supporting the ban.

EIA has spent a decade investigating illegal logging and trade, bringing the issue to political prominence in the United States and the European Union. EIA estimated that 10% of annual wood product imports into the U.S. in 2006 – worth some \$3.8 billion – are derived from illegally logged timber.

The bipartisan Lacey Act amendment was championed by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR). It is supported by a broad coalition of conservation, industry, and labor organizations.

“This legislation will go a long way towards not only leveling the playing field for American manufacturers, but to protecting jobs and addressing the illegal logging crisis,” said Senator Wyden.

“The world’s biggest consumer nation has sent a message today that will be heard in forest communities around the world,” concluded von Bismarck.

Further information on the Environmental Investigation Agency and illegal logging is available at: www.eia-global.org and www.eia-international.org

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