

## Effort to Curb Trade in Illegal Timber

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WASHINGTON -- Lawmakers concerned that hardwood imports increasingly are derived from illegally harvested timber want to crack down on illegal logging around the world.

Bills in the House and Senate would ban U.S. imports of wood products derived from illegally harvested timber. The measures are aimed at lowpriced hardwood products that often are harvested from illegal sources, processed at low cost in China and elsewhere and imported to the U.S. at prices below what U.S. manufacturers can charge.

Illegal logging costs U.S. companies as much as \$1 billion a year in lost exports and reduced prices for timber products, according to the American Forest and Paper Association, a trade group that represents the wood products industry. The association has endorsed the Senate bill, along with the Hardwood Federation, Environmental Investigation Agency, Sierra Club, Greenpeace and other groups.

Democratic [Sen. Ron Wyden](#) of Oregon, lead sponsor of the bill he introduced Wednesday, said it would help "level the playing field for American manufacturers," protect jobs and address a growing source of severe environmental damage in regions such as the Amazon, Congo Basin, Indonesia and Siberia.

The bill would extend the Lacey Act -- which prohibits importation of wildlife taken in violation of conservation laws -- so it would apply to wood and timber products. The measure would ban the import, export, purchase or sale of timber products made in violation of any domestic, foreign law or international treaty related to natural resources.

The International Wood Products Association, which represents wood importers and suppliers, said the proposal would "deputize" U.S. companies to enforce foreign laws and do nothing to stop forest destruction.