

(Washington, DC) – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) introduced a [House Resolution, H. Res 839](#), condemning the unchecked illegal logging and decimation of Madagascar’s endemic species.

After a coup in March, the new and weakened government of Andry Rajoelina issued sweeping decrees allowing the harvest and export of wood from protected forests and World Heritage Sites. The Obama administration has condemned the de facto government, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society have denounced the wholesale exploitation of some of the world’s most diverse forests and decimation of the local population’s resources and livelihoods.

“Madagascar is a nation rich in biodiversity, and it is imperative that we act quickly to prevent the catastrophic and irreparable harm caused by illegal logging,” **said Congressman Blumenauer.** “The de facto government is using the nation’s endangered resources to boost its regime, and the international community must engage before it is too late for these protected species. My resolution should serve as a serious international signal that Congress is alert to what’s happening in Madagascar, and I will continue to do all I can to protect our world’s precious resources.”

Author of the Legal Timber Protection Act, H.R. 1497, Blumenauer is a global leader on the issue of illegal logging. The law, signed in May 2008, bans the trade in illegally harvested timber and wood products, providing the tools to keep illegally harvested timber out of the U.S.

The loss of Madagascar’s spectacular biodiversity would not only be a global tragedy, but it will further impoverish rural communities whose lives are inextricably tied to the health of their natural environments,” **said Lisa Steel, Senior Program Officer for Madagascar at World Wildlife Fund.** “While Madagascar is under the rule of a weakened government, it is essential that the international community work to stop the harvest and trade of illegal wood and other protected species, and we appreciate this important first step by Congressman Blumenauer.”

The Resolution is co-sponsored by Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health on the Committee for Foreign Affairs, as well as Congressman Eni Faleomavaega (D-AS), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and the Global Environment.

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