

Washington, DC – Today the Natural Resources Committee passed unanimously the Legal Timber Protection Act, legislation Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) introduced in March. The Legal Timber Protection Act, H.R. 1497, bans the trade in illegally harvested timber and wood products and provides the tools to keep illegally harvested timber out of the United States.

“Illegal logging threatens some of the world’s richest and most vulnerable forests and costs the U.S. forest products industry over \$1 billion every year in lost opportunities and lower prices,” said Congressman Blumenauer. “I have worked with an unprecedented coalition of industry, environmental and union groups to come to an agreement on the language in this bill, and I am pleased the Natural Resources Committee passed this important legislation. The Legal Timber Protection Act steps up the fight against illegal logging. It is good for the environment, good for people and good for timber communities at home and abroad.”

Illegal logging contributes to huge financial losses to the United States and producing nations. U.S. companies lose an estimated \$460 million in export opportunities every year because of displacement caused by illegally harvested timber. The annual value of U.S. exports is between \$500 - \$700 million lower due to pressure from illegally harvested timber. Oregon produces approximately 13% of U.S. lumber, and losses to the state are estimated at \$130 - \$150 million every year.

The bill’s language was developed through extensive consultation with a broad spectrum of industry representatives, conservation organizations, and government agencies. In July, Senator Wyden introduced a complementary bill in the Senate.