

Illegal Logging Harms Communities and Our Climate

Help Promote Fair Trade – Not Forest Destruction



Tropical forests provide homes for an incredible array of wildlife and other species. Orchids drip from a tree that stretches high into the canopy, absorbing sun and softening rainfall. Birds chatter in the branches as an orangutan mother shows her child how to use a stick to forage. Their rainforest home contains not only a wealth of

biodiversity and a livelihood for local people, but may prove integral to solving the global warming crisis.

Forests hold massive amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) within their plant life. When forests are eliminated, this CO₂ is released back into the atmosphere where it contributes to global warming. Scientists estimate that one quarter of the reductions in CO₂ emissions necessary to stabilize the atmosphere can be achieved simply by preserving the world's forests and managing land use sustainably. Currently, 30% of the global warming pollution released into the atmosphere each year is a result of deforestation.

Well managed, sustainable forestry can help to conserve wildlife and other species while providing timber products that we use. Unfortunately, most commercial logging in developing countries is illegal, often focusing on rare or endangered species such as bigleaf mahogany, merbau, and ramin which fetch high prices in the market.

The True Cost of Illegal Logging

- Illegal logging does not generate revenue necessary for countries to pay off debt or provide basic services. The World Bank estimates that developing countries lose \$15 billion annually to illegal logging.
- The economies of developed countries suffer when domestic timber industries are undercut by cheap imports. The U.S. timber industry estimates annual losses of \$1 billion due to decreased exports and depressed prices.
- Indigenous communities and farmers are forced to work for logging companies and, in some cases, have received death threats from timber companies. In the Peruvian mahogany industry alone, an estimated 33,000 individuals work under forced labor conditions.
- The illegal timber trade may be used to smuggle narcotics and launder drug money, while profits from these illegal sales are used to finance criminal regimes or perpetuate regional conflict.
- Deforested areas are extremely vulnerable to mudslides from heavy rains, floods, or waves. The President of the Philippines banned domestic logging after hundreds of people died in mudslides triggered by a typhoon.

What is the Connection to Global Trade?

Without continued consumption of illegal products, illegal logging will cease to be profitable. As the world's largest consumer of wood products, the United States must be a leader in stopping this illegal trade.

Unfortunately, the U.S. has or is in the process of negotiating trade agreements with countries harboring some of the worst offenders of illegal logging in the world. For example, the U.S. imports 93% of Peru's mahogany, most of which is harvested illegally, yet has proposed no language within the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement to address this. Similarly, shipments of illegal Indonesian timber through Singapore have increased by 62% since the implementation of a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Singapore.

The Bush Administration has done little to address the illegal logging crisis. The environmental provisions in our trade agreements are filled with nice-sounding yet non-binding rhetoric. The European Union (EU), on the other hand, has signed an agreement with Indonesia to ensure the EU only purchases legally harvested timber.

We have no time to lose in setting a forward-looking trade policy that would include meaningful and binding provisions to protect the global treasure of wildlife, promote sustainable practices and help curb global warming. New trade agreements should contain a definitive ban on trade in illegally harvested timber.



Trade done right can help lift living standards while also protecting our precious natural resources.

Contact your Member of Congress and tell them that Free Trade should not mean illegal trade and that our agreements must contain environmental safeguards and prohibitions against illegal logging.

For more information on the Sierra Club's Responsible Trade Campaign contact responsible.trade@sierraclub.org or visit www.sierraclub.org/trade.

**Use Your Purchasing Power!
Motivate companies to source legal and sustainable timber.**

Ask your local stores if the wood products you are buying were legally and responsibly harvested.



Look for products with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label and if you cannot find any, ask the store to stock them.

Also, ask your employer to use FSC certified paper and wood products.