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## **Congress Passes Bill to Halt Illegal Timber Trade First Step Toward Stopping Illegal Logging**

Congress today passed the Prevention of Illegal Logging Practices. The legislation which was incorporated into the Farm Bill (Section 8204), makes it a crime to knowingly import, sell, buy or transport illegally-sourced plants and wood products.

In response Margrete Strand Rangnes, Senior Washington Representative for the Sierra Club's Responsible Trade Program issued the following statement.

“This amendment is a critical component in protecting the world's forests and the incredible biodiversity that they hold. Illegal logging is a serious problem, both for the U.S. and abroad—accelerating global warming, degrading drinking water supplies and depressing prices for legal timber products.

“One-fifth of the global warming gases released each year are caused by deforestation. Additionally, the illegal timber trade breeds corruption and crime that often threatens the lives of citizens who want clean water, sustainable jobs for their communities and lasting protection for the natural legacy of their countries. When Americans buy timber products that originate from illegally harvested timber, they unknowingly support illegal timber syndicates that have murdered and exploited citizens in Honduras, Mexico, Brazil and other nations.

“As one of the world's largest importers of timber and wood products the U.S. has a responsibility to stop illegally harvested timber and wood products from entering our markets. Today the U.S. made great progress and provided enforcement agencies with a powerful new tool for fighting illegal logging. But this is a global problem and there is still much to be done. We encourage other importing countries to enact similar measures.”

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