

PULP and PAPERWORKERS' RESOURCE COUNCIL (PPRC)

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Resources for holding this very important hearing concerning the Endangered Species Act.

I would like to give a brief history about the Pulp and Paperworkers' Resource Council, more commonly known as the PPRC. We are a “grassroots, non-partisan” organization, formed in 1992, made up of hourly employees who work in the forest products industry. We work on fiber supply, forest practices, endangered species and environmental issues that impact our jobs. We are dedicated to the conservation of our environment while taking into account the economic stability of the workforce and our surrounding communities. We are dedicated men and women working together for one common cause. That cause being “OUR JOBS”.

The PPRC began in the Pacific Northwest where the spotted owl was successful in shutting down many mills, thereby causing us to lose thousands of good living wage American jobs in the forest products, pulp and paper sectors. As time progressed, we realized this loss of jobs would not just stay in the Pacific Northwest, nor would it only relate to endangered species.

PPRC PURPOSE STATEMENT

“To establish a grassroots coalition concerned with fiber supply, the Endangered Species Act, and our environment in a way that promotes knowledge and political activism, so we may influence legislation and policies that affects our jobs.”

The Pulp and Paperworkers’ Resource Council (PPRC) proposes the Endangered Species Act (ESA) be updated to give equal consideration to social and economic, as well as biological, concerns.

- Currently, too many ESA listings lack a substantial basis in hard scientific data. The House Resources Committee passed legislation (HR 1662 – The Endangered Species Data Quality Act of 2004) that focused on the importance of using field-tested data and continual research. In addition to including this language, revisions to the Act should insure that ESA

decisions are based on sound science, including peer review of listing and recovery decisions.

- ESA should limit the definition of threatened and endangered “species” to those species which are biologically unique, excluding those that are only geographically isolated from other populations of the same species.
- To stop the current tactic by environmental officials of targeting of state officials, who issue permits to private parties to merely conduct activities on their land, Congress and the Administration should consider actions to limit liability of state officials various means, including legislation if necessary.
- The current consultation process in ESA has mushroomed into an unnecessarily lengthy and expensive process. Congress should support Administration efforts to update these processes and provide legislative direction as necessary.
- Agency meetings to list or de-list species should be held in the geographic area to be economically impacted.
- After a listing decision is made, full consideration should be given to all social and economic issues in all subsequent steps in the ESA process.
- Litigation by environmental groups has made the critical designation process a costly drain of financial and human resources with very little gain in regard to species conservation. Congress should focus the critical habitat process on

species restoration by removing it from the regulatory arena and making it part of the recovery process.

Wood products employees support ESA reform. Protecting truly endangered species is in the best interests of the public. The impact on people, property and jobs should be evaluated when making the regulations.

ESA needs to be modernized and updated after thirty years.

- The ESA mandate system is not working.
- The ESA should be on equal footing with, not superior to, all other laws.
- The ESA needs to be absolutely based in objective and verifiable science.
- The ESA should be a flexible and rational Act and apolitical in all decisions.
- There should be a greater role for states and local governments in all ESA decisions.
- State constitutional authority over plants and animals should be restored.
- There should be compensation for private property owners when ESA diminishes property values.
- The ACT should be amended to ensure that the species will not be listed until a recovery plan is developed and appropriations are approved.

REFORM (re-form') n. 1. the improvement or amendment of what is wrong, corrupt, etc.

The Pulp and Paperworkers' Resource Council believes the time for reform is now and only "Real Reform" will help both plants and animals and preserve the American way of life.

- The PPRC wants to conserve the nation's endangered species but wants it done in partnership with the federal government, not under the command-and control authority of federal agencies.
- The PPRC supports access to information used by the government in the ESA decision-making process.
- The PPRC feels that in order to simplify the process and make the Act work, ESA decisions should be based on sound science and include peer review of listing and recovery decisions.
- The PPRC feels that true scientific facts and field data should be weighed more heavily than computer modeling.
- The PPRC supports limiting the definition of threatened and endangered "species" to those which are biologically unique, excluding those that are only geographically isolated from other populations of the same species.

Some other consideration:

- Create economic incentives to encourage species and habitat protection among private landowners.
- Recognize the importance and value of private property rights and that private landowners should not have to bear all the expenses of species recovery.
- Consider economic impacts to landowners and adjacent communities during all phases of ESA implementation.

Since ESA was enacted in 1973, over 1300 species have been listed as either threatened or endangered, but only 10 domestic species have been recovered sufficiently to be removed from the list. That's less than a 1% success rate. The radical environmental community love ESA as it is now. They sue the landowners and governmental agencies to stop development and harvesting and management of timber resources. The results are violations of private property rights, interference with decisions based on sound science, prevention of projects, valuable resources access denied, mismanagement of government-owned land, and rural America suffers the economic hardship of such actions.

The forest products industry is a vital part of the economy of the United States, especially the southern states. Most property in the Southern United States is

privately owned. Besides all the other environmental hurdles we face, without fiber our industry would not survive. ESA directly affects fiber supply.

ESA reform is needed now!

Imagine how excited economic developers would be if they got word of a business that provided 850 high paying jobs with an annual payroll of nearly \$60 million.

This business would pay more than \$11 million in state and local taxes every year.

This would surely be the largest taxpayer in the parish. Purchases in a two - parish area alone would top \$20 million. This business would also provide for nearly 500 associated jobs for area residents in transportation and harvesting.

Employees of this business would be active in almost every aspect of the community. Collectively, the group would give an average of \$150,000 a year to the local United Way.

Conservative estimates of the total economic impact of that operation would be well over 3,000 jobs and \$250 million annually. That doesn't even include statewide purchases of \$110 million for wood fiber, raw materials and chemicals and \$30 million annually for energy to sustain the operation.

That would have economic development experts, local and area elected officials and the general public jumping through hoops to see what they could do to land such a prize.

But what if that business is one that already exists? I know of one that already exists. The facts I stated are about International Paper's Louisiana Mill in Bastrop, Louisiana. June 13th, I'll have 31 years employment there.

Can you imagine what would happen to the employees and the community if we lost that? That is why we are working as hard as we can every day to see that we do everything we can to make sure that doesn't happen.

The economic environment for the forest products industry in the United States is not good. We see most of the growth overseas and in the Pacific Rim.

Again, fiber supply is vital and ESA affects us. **ESA reform is needed!** You can make a difference. I ask you to put a human face on ESA when you consider reform.

Thank you.

