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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Bruce Westerman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Raul Grijalva  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1332 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva,

I write today to express my serious concerns with H.R. 7157, the “Strengthen Wood Product Supply Chains Act.” In the name of making things better for the wood products industry, this bill would actually do the opposite. It threatens to significantly undermine Lacey Act enforcement efforts targeting the illegal trade in timber, wood products, and wildlife.

Leading up to the enactment of the Lacey Act plant amendments in 2008, I worked closely with fellow legislators on both sides of the aisle and a strong coalition of industry, labor, and environmental groups to ensure the United States took action to help bring an end to the egregious practice of illegal logging, the third largest transnational crime. Our goal was to protect some of the world’s most biodiverse and vulnerable forests and to offer a more level playing field to U.S. companies that play by the rules. Illegal logging harms lives and livelihoods, both at home where it costs the U.S. forest products industry more than \$1 billion every year, and around the world where it is associated with serious human rights violations including the degradation of indigenous communities. When effectively implemented, the Lacey Act amendments protect the environment, reward honest businesses, and prevent rampant corruption.

In the years since its passage, we have seen the law have a positive impact. I am encouraged that many industry stakeholders are developing due care strategies to ensure illegal timber does not enter their supply chains. Yet the steady caseload of illegal wood products entering the United States demonstrates the very real need for more effective enforcement against those companies that turn a blind eye to illegal sourcing and others who knowingly trade in it. Now is the time to strengthen the Lacey Act amendments, not undermine them.

However, H.R. 7157 would hamper the federal agencies tasked with combatting the import of illegally sourced wood products. It would limit the time allotted to agencies to conduct a proper investigation into suspect imports of wood products, allow companies to remove suspect timber and wildlife products from government control while an active investigation is ongoing, and require federal officials to disclose the justification and evidence for a detained shipment within

an unreasonably short time period. Taken together, these new restrictions will impede effective enforcement of the Lacey Act.

As written, H.R. 7157 opens the door to smugglers and illegal loggers, much to the detriment of honest U.S. industry actors, forests, wildlife and local peoples. I urge you to reconsider your support for this legislation and address your concerns without compromising robust enforcement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Earl Blumenauer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "E".

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress