



Support H.R. 3210 The Bi-Partisan RELIEF Act



THE RETAILERS & ENTERTAINERS LACEY IMPLEMENTATION & ENFORCEMENT FAIRNESS ACT

With little in the way of consideration or debate in the House and Senate, Congress passed amendments to the Lacey Act, a century-old environmental law, after it was tacked on to the massive Farm Bill in 2008. Although the goals of the amendments to discourage illegal logging are laudable, circumventing the normal legislative process resulted in unintended consequences that now threaten American businesses and jobs.

Since 2008, American businesses have faced significant uncertainty and costs as they try to comply with the Lacey Act's burdensome regulatory requirements. Under the new law, companies have to file mountains of paperwork that our own government admits serve no purpose. Consumers and anyone else possessing wood products made before 2008 are now at legal risk. And everyone who uses imported wood or wood products is responsible for understanding numerous foreign laws even government regulators admit are unknowable. Even if a company or consumer has done everything right to comply with the law, the law imposes strict liability for any violations, which results in seizure with absolutely no recourse to the courts. Clearly, we can make complying with the Lacey Act less onerous for American businesses without putting at risk timber jobs or threatening the sustainability of important ecosystems.

The RELIEF Act (H.R. 3210) seeks to do just that. Offered by Reps. Jim Cooper and Marsha Blackburn, the RELIEF Act is a pragmatic, sensible, and targeted approach that enables our businesses to have greater clarity, thereby enhancing their ability to protect the environment, while giving our over-burdened enforcement agencies better ability to focus on the smugglers, scofflaws, and enemies of conservation.

The legislation improves Lacey Act compliance by making four minor common sense changes-

- 1) Clarifying that wood products assembled and processed prior to the 2008 amendment are legal to possess and sell.
- 2) Giving businesses and consumers a day in court to prove they complied with the law if their property is seized by the Federal government.
- 3) Limiting declaration to "solid wood" products (the agency enforcing the declaration already excludes many wood and plant products that are not solid wood).
- 4) Restricting the application of foreign laws to those that are "directed at the protection, conservation and management of plants."

Support H.R. 3210. Vote "yes."

