

SENSE OF THE CONGRESS REGARDING MANAGEMENT OF
FORESTS TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GASES

OCTOBER 21, 1997.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, from the Committee on Resources,
submitted the following

REPORT

together with

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

[To accompany H. Con. Res. 151]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Resources, to whom was referred the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 151) expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should manage its public domain national forests to maximize the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere among many other objectives and that the United States should serve as an example and as a world leader in actively managing its public domain national forests in a manner that substantially reduces the amount of carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendments and recommend that the concurrent resolution as amended be agreed to.

The amendments are as follows:

Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

That it is the sense of the Congress that the United States—

(1) should manage its forests to maximize the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere among many other objectives; and

(2) should serve as an example and as a world leader in managing its forests in a manner that substantially reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Amend the preamble to read as follows:

Whereas carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, can be removed from the atmosphere by trees through photosynthesis and stored in wood;
 Whereas releases of carbon dioxide can be prevented by the use of wood products as substitutes for products whose manufacture consumes fossil fuels and releases substantial amounts of carbon dioxide; and
 Whereas managing our forests by planting and growing our forest resources will remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere: Now, therefore, be it

Amend the title so as to read:

Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should manage its forests to maximize the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere among many other objectives, and that the United States should serve as an example and as a world leader in managing its forests in a manner that substantially reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H. Con. Res. 151 is to express the sense of the Congress that the United States should manage its public domain national forests to maximize the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere among many other objectives and that the United States should serve as an example and as a world leader in actively managing its public domain national forests in a manner that substantially reduces the amount of carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Global warming has been an issue of great debate and recent discussion in Congress. This is due to the fact that in December of this year, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meets in Kyoto, Japan. The Clinton-Gore Administration has stated publicly that they intend to commit the United States to mandatory greenhouse gas reductions at the Convention.

Science has proven to us that carbon dioxide, the leading greenhouse gas, can be taken out of the atmosphere by allowing a young vibrant forest to absorb carbon through photosynthesis. It is stored as wood. Carbon dioxide can also be kept out of the atmosphere by harvesting the forest before it begins to decompose or burn, thus storing the carbon in wood products that are environmentally friendly, as well as providing an economic benefit to society.

The most extensive scientific work on this subject has been conducted by Dr. John Perez-Garcia, Associate Professor, University of Washington; Dr. Chadwick Oliver, Professor, University of Washington; Mr. Bruce Lippke, Professor and Director of the Center for International Trade in Forest Products; and Mr. R. Neil Sampson.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H. Con. Res. 151 was introduced on September 10, 1997, by Congressman Don Young (R-AK) (for himself, Mr. Gingrich, Mrs. Chenoweth, Mr. Taylor of North Carolina, Mr. Herger, and Mr. Peterson of Pennsylvania, Mr. Pombo, Mr. McInnis, Mr. Sessions, Mrs. Smith of Washington, Mr. Riggs, Mr. Cunningham, Mrs. Cubin, Mr. Nethercutt, Mr. Doolittle, Mr. Lewis of California, Mr. Skeen, Mr. Bob Schaffer of Colorado, Mr. Hansen, and Mr. Radanovich). The bill was referred to the Committee on Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health. On September 18, 1997, the Subcommittee held a

hearing on H. Con. Res. 151, where Dr. Chadwick Oliver, Dr. John Perez-Garcia and Commissioner Gordon Ross testified as to the scientific capabilities of forests to be managed in order to maximize reductions of greenhouse gases. Each one of the outside expert witnesses testified in support of H. Con. Res. 151. The Administration testified in opposition to H. Con. Res. 151. James R. Lyons, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, United States Department of Agriculture, stated that the Administration felt the resolution's focus was too narrow. On October 1, 1997, the Full Resources Committee met to consider H. Con. Res. 151. The Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health was discharged from further consideration of the bill. Congressman George Miller (D-CA) offered an amendment to broaden the scope of the bill, and adopted by voice vote. The bill as amended was then ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by voice vote.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the requirements of clause 2(1)(3) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, and clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States grants Congress the authority to enact H. Con. Res. 151.

COST OF THE LEGISLATION

Clause 7(a) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out H. Con. Res. 151. However, clause 7(d) of that rule provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XI

1. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(1)(3)(B) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, H. Con. Res. 151 does not contain any new budget authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures. The Congressional Budget Office has suggested that enactment of H. Con. Res. 151 could affect direct spending (including offsetting receipts) by altering the amount and timing of timber harvested from federal lands if the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management changed their forest management plans to include the objectives of the bill.

2. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(1)(3)(D) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received no report of oversight findings and recommendations from

the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight on the subject of H. Con. Res. 151.

3. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(1)(3)(C) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for H. Con. Res. 151 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, October 7, 1997.

Hon. DON YOUNG,
*Chairman, Committee on Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H. Con. Res. 151, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should manage its forests to maximize the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere among many other objectives, and that the United States should serve as an example and as a world leader in managing its forests in a manner that substantially reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Victoria V. Heid.

Sincerely,

JUNE E. O'NEILL, *Director.*

Enclosure.

H. Con. Res. 151—Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should manage its forests to maximize the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere among many other objectives, and that the United States should serve as an example and as a world leader in managing its forests in a manner that substantially reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

H. Con. Res. 151 expresses the sense of the Congress that reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere should be included among other objectives in managing forests. If the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) changed their forest management plans to include this additional objective, H. Con. Res. 151 could affect direct spending (including offsetting receipts) by altering the amount and timing of timber harvested from federal lands. However, CBO has no basis for predicting whether compliance with this concurrent resolution would increase or decrease direct spending, nor can we predict the magnitude of any such changes. If the agencies amended all the existing forest management plans to include the additional management objective in this concurrent resolution, discretionary spending would increase, subject to appropriation of the necessary amounts.

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 does not apply to concurrent resolutions.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Victoria V. Heid. This estimate was approved by Paul N. Van de Water, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

H. Con. Res. 151 contains no unfunded mandates.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, H. Con. Res. 151 would make no changes in existing law.

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

The resolution as introduced generated significant opposition, including the Clinton Administration. It was interpreted as promoting the logging of U.S. old-growth forests under the guise of combating global warming. It was based on a flawed theory that harvesting older trees and replacing them young, vibrant new trees presents an alternative to mandatory reductions of carbon emissions from fossil fuel sources.

But these are truly minority views, unsupported by the majority of the scientific community.

I certainly agree with the Majority that forests do serve to remove carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere. But the amendment I offered in committee was intended to make it clear that I do not endorse any notion that it is desirable to increase old-growth harvest on U.S. national forests in an attempt to reduce global warming. Among other problems, that would be a horribly misguided message to send to the rest of the world, especially as we seek to encourage conservation of forest resources in the tropics and elsewhere.

To the contrary, old-growth reserves in the U.S. should be encouraged. In particular, the temperate rainforests in the Pacific Northwest are among the most effective carbon sinks in the world. Mainstream science shows that when the old-growth is harvested, it takes many decades to recover the vast amount of carbon released in the process. Over 50 percent of the carbon dioxide captured by trees is stored in the soil, and only a very small portion of harvested trees actually turned into products which sequester carbon for any extended period of time.

Carbon reduction can and should be improved by planting and growing more forest cover in the U.S., especially on marginal crop and pasture lands. That's one reason the amended resolution applies not only to national forests, but to all U.S. forests including private lands.

In addition to sequestering carbon, forests produce many other benefits including protection of watersheds, reduction of soil erosion and conservation of biodiversity. And that's why the amended resolution makes clear that carbon reduction is only one of many forest management objectives.

Forest-based carbon sequestration, while important, does not supplant the need to reduce fossil fuel emissions in order to combat global warming. With only a small portion of the world's population, the U.S. produces one-fourth of the world's emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases. The original theme underlying this resolution—that accelerated harvesting of U.S. old-growth forests is an alternative to emissions reductions—would de-

servedly be ridiculed by the rest of the world in global warming treaty negotiations.

GEORGE MILLER.

APPENDIX

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, October 20, 1997.

Hon. DON YOUNG,
*Chairman, Committee on Resources,
Longworth HOB, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for forwarding a copy of H. Con. Res. 151, as reported by your Committee. I noted your Committee adopted an amendment to H. Con. Res. 151, prior to reporting the Resolution, that changes its scope to embrace the management of all "forests" rather than limiting the Resolution as introduced to "public domain national forests".

I believe we both understand that the amendment changes the bill sufficiently to bring it within the legislative jurisdiction of this Committee as provided in Rule X of the House Rules. However, in the interest of expediting consideration of H. Con. Res. 151 and in the interest of both of our Committees in ensuring that this Resolution, as you have reported it, is acted on promptly, this Committee is willing to waive further consideration of this Resolution so as to advance its early consideration in the House.

This action is not intended to waive this Committee's jurisdiction over this matter for all purposes, and should this legislation go to conference, this Committee reserves the right to request to be included as conferees on any provision within the Committee on Agriculture's jurisdiction in the event of a House-Senate conference on this Resolution or its Senate equivalent.

Once again, I appreciate your cooperation in this matter and look forward to working with you on matters of shared jurisdiction between our respective Committees.

Sincerely,

ROBERT F. (BOB) SMITH,
Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture.

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