

News Release. . .

# U.S. Senator Ron Wyden

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## **Wyden Proposes Dramatic Overhaul of Federal Forest Practices in Oregon** **End to Federal Old Growth Logging; Speed-up Restoration of At-risk Forests; Create Timber Jobs**

(Full text of the proposal, full statement by Senator Wyden, and bill summary are available at:  
[www.wyden.senate.gov/forestproposal](http://www.wyden.senate.gov/forestproposal).)

*Washington, D.C.* –Striking a balance between the need to sustain forests, as well as bolster the economy, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) today proposed an expansive overhaul of federal forest practices in the State of Oregon. Wyden’s initiative would permanently end the logging of old growth trees and discourage clear-cutting, while placing a new emphasis on greatly expedited, large-scale forest restoration efforts to improve forest health and create many thousands of new jobs.

**“For the sake of our environment, economy, and our way of life, we must come together to pursue a concerted, new focus on sustainable forestry management that will create thousands of new jobs and restore the health of our forests,”** Wyden said. **“The only way to produce this kind of change is to put new ideas forward, seek common ground, and break away from the old politics that led us to this dysfunctional and dangerous situation.”**

Decades of scientifically-unsound forest management and fire suppression policies have put millions of acres of choked and plantation forests at an unacceptably high risk for uncharacteristically-severe fires, disease, and insect infestation. Wyden’s proposal, the “Oregon Forest Restoration and Old Growth Protection Act,” would address this emergency by:

- requiring the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Oregon to re-direct their management activities to address fire and insect risk, while protecting environmentally-sensitive and significant lands, and promote ongoing, sustainable production of wood;
- eliminating administrative appeals for forest management conducted under the new forestry directives;
- allowing pilot restoration projects of up to 25,000 acres in each of Oregon's national forests and BLM districts in at-risk areas without encountering years of NEPA and administrative delay (by issuing those projects a "Categorical Exclusion" from NEPA review).

Lands designated as "matrix" under the Northwest Forest Plan would explicitly be required to be managed for both economic and ecological purposes.

Wyden, who chairs the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, estimates that his reforms will approximately double the timber harvest for Oregon that has been achieved annually since President Bush took office.

**"It is past the time to take the recurring quarrels over old-growth forests 'off of the table' so that we can move forward with programs about which we have a social consensus -- such as restoring more ecologically functional and sustainable forest landscapes and providing a predictable flow of wood from the federal lands,"** said Jerry Franklin, professor of Ecosystem Science at the University of Washington. **"This bill, with its strong scientific foundation, is an appropriate basis for the Congressional action that is needed to get things moving."**

**"The forest restoration strategy contained in Senator Wyden's proposal, if fully implemented, can provide timber products and income over the next 20 years that would significantly increase current harvest levels on the national forests and slightly increase harvest levels on BLM O&C lands compared to recent history,"** Said Norm Johnson, professor of Forest Resources at Oregon State University. **"It also would make available significant quantities of biomass and assist many rural communities by providing employment and community engagement in the restoration process."**

**"For two decades, the failure of community leaders, environmental groups and industry to agree on the appropriate way to manage our forests has resulted in gridlock that has harmed both forest health and the economies of resource-dependent rural communities."** Russell Hoeflich, Oregon director of The Nature Conservancy, said. **"We commend Senator Wyden's efforts to break through this gridlock and restore health to Oregon's forests and rural communities. We look forward to working with him to achieve this critical goal."**

Oregonians are invited to review Senator Wyden's proposal and to share their thoughts at: [www.wyden.senate.gov/forestproposal](http://www.wyden.senate.gov/forestproposal)