

Timber Harvest Plans Can Be Extended to Seven Years

Bipartisan Measure Will Help Save Jobs in Timber Industry

Devastated by California's strangling regulations and the economy, the timber harvest industry may see a glimmer of hope with the passage of a bipartisan measure to allow for more time to complete a timber harvest plan.

"At a time when unemployment is high and job opportunities are scarce, this is great news for those workers whose livelihood depends on the timber industry," said Sen. Dave Cox. "Assemblyman Mendoza, all community leaders and businesses involved should be applauded for their dedication and hard work."

Backed by North State Senator Dave Cox and the Republican Caucus including Sacramento region's Roger Niello, Assembly Bill 1066 (D-Mendoza) passed overwhelmingly in both houses of the Legislature and was signed by the Governor on Sunday.

Specifically, Assembly Bill 1066 extends the life of timber harvest plans from five to seven years. It also reduces regulatory costs for private foresters until 2012. By reducing regulatory requirements without sacrificing environmental protection, this measure will make California-produced wood more competitive with its neighboring states.

El Dorado County Chamber Chief Executive Officer Laurel Brent-Bumb stated, "Our team, the Sustainable Forest Action Council, has made a difference as the passage of AB 1066 will provide the forest products industry needed relief in this difficult economy. Albeit a small victory, we understand the process to balance is incremental."

In recent years, burdensome regulations have doubled the costs for Timber Harvest Plan developments and reviews. California's timber companies pay approximately \$60 per thousand board feet while those in Oregon pay a mere \$8 per thousand board feet.

In March, Sierra Pacific Industries announced the closures of sawmills in Camino, Quincy, and Sonora. Over 436 workers were laid off. Forestry issues are important to residents of the North State. Groups like the Sustainable Forest Action Coalition and the Quincy Library Group have been instrumental in highlighting these issues for policy-makers.