



## An American Loggers Council Opinion

### Hesitate Before You Regulate

Jobs in private industry that are sustainable have always been a function of confidence and understanding the limits that control a business. The following pieces of legislation have grown from their original intent and now factor into a steady stream of job losses throughout the United States.

Occupational Safety and Health Act  
Clean Water Act  
Clean Air Act  
National Environmental Policy Act  
Endangered Species Act  
US Labor laws

They are all well intentioned acts of Congress each with the promise of either protecting the environment or workers. Each sets a standard for Federal oversight and regulation into the way that businesses in the US are allowed to operate.

Over the past several decades, we have seen a shift to offshore investments in the steel, textile, and furniture industries because of the cost of doing business here in the United States, and now our wood products sector is following suite. With this movement comes the loss of good paying manufacturing jobs both in the mills and out in the forests.

Who's paying the price for these over reaching regulations?

America's business community, skilled workforce and ultimately America's consumers

Who's impacted most by these regulations?

The natural resource based communities in rural America, who are dependent on access to America's abundant natural resources.

It's time to level the playing field. While certainly members of Congress meant no real economic harm to American citizens when promulgating these statutes, the real impact has been the loss of manufacturing jobs in the US economy to regions of the world where such regulations are either non existent or are not enforced.

Currently the President through the use of an executive order has instructed the EPA to begin regulating CO2 emissions. As this current Congress continues to expound on their desire to do what is best for the struggling economy, realizing that the vast majority of new jobs created in the US are created by small businesses, they seem to be more intent in driving up the cost of doing business here in the US rather than trying to figure out ways to make us more competitive.

Our recommendations to Congress are these:

1. Take a look at the regulations that currently exist in the US and how they are being implemented, compare them to other countries. Determine what we can do to encourage other countries to meet our current regulations before placing more regulations on those businesses here in the United States that already can not compete.
2. Take a look at the regulations that exist in this country and determine which ones are being abused by special interest groups to halt economic growth, not because of real harm to endangered species, water sources or air quality, but because the regulations themselves are so convoluted that they are subject to any interpretation that a courtroom might find appropriate on any given day.
3. Monitor, and if necessary, amend these acts to meet the original intent of Congress in order to prevent abuse and misinterpretation by federal employees and the courtroom by providing specific guidance and parameters for interpretation.

We have some of the cleanest air and water in the world, and we are not recommending that any of these statutes go away; but what we do recommend is leveling the playing field for all world countries doing business with the United States so that we can remain competitive and maintain a manufacturing sector that has historically made the United States' economy strong. Stop penalizing businesses here in the United States for trying to do things right, adding costs to the system, while competing with those abroad that could care less about environmental or workplace issues.

Without these manufacturing jobs and our ability to produce and export goods from the US, we will be destined to rely on a service economy which is dependent on the rest of the world for survival. Let's don't put ourselves in that position. Let's hesitate before we regulate.