

June 12, 1979

REMARKS by Oregon Congressman Les AuCoin in response to Monday's announcement by Alfred E. Kahn of the president's decision to increase timber supplies through a temporary waiver of the sustained yield timber harvesting policy on Forest Service and BLM lands.

"This decision -- which came as a surprise to me and evidently many others -- could make sense in terms of anticipating a recession, in terms of relief from inflation in the cost of housing, and in terms of economic stability.

"But a number of questions need to be explored before I can say whether the decision is advisable.

"For example, if you increase the yield now, what will be the effect down the road? Can the non-declining, even-flow yield policy be maintained, or will it be necessary to cut back on the yield sometime in the future? If so, whatever beneficial effect a temporary increase in timber supplies may have on housing costs needs to be measured against the costs ahead that we may be incurring.

"What's the real purpose of this action? Is this an anti-inflation effort, and if so, what will be the payoff? Or is it an anti-recession move to ward off economic woes for timber industry-dependent communities?

"Another question: How is this decision going to mesh with Forest Service recommendations for multiple-use and wilderness lands which are awaiting action in Congress?

"Without question, more attention at the highest levels of government is needed on the management of our national forests.

"With these and other concerns in mind, I've asked for a briefing from the administration. Right now there are too many questions and too few answers."