

Revision
EXTENSION OF REMARKS

Congressman Les AuCoin
September 25, 1980

(I support the conference report and strongly oppose the motion to delete vitally needed)
~~Support the motion~~

MR. AuCOIN. Mr. Chairman, we are considering today legislation that will provide incentives to reforest our private timberlands, which will play an increasingly important role in helping meet our nation's demand for wood fiber in the years ahead.

lands

When the earliest settlers landed on American shores, forests covered nearly all the land from the eastern seaboard to the Great Plains. Most people back then regarded timber as something to get rid of, because it blocked progress.

Now we realize how wrong we were. We vitally need timber resources.

Our public timber resources, though vast, will not be adequate to meet our needs in the decades to come. We must rely more heavily on privately held timberlands.

This legislation begins to give the necessary priority and incentive to manage private timberlands with an eye to the future. It does it simply by putting investments in timber on the same footing as investments of other kinds.

It has been illogical to expect Americans to invest substantially in private timberlands, absorb all costs and take all risks, without any return to the investor for decades. And at that the return on equity for wood products is lower than the return on other capital investments.

This bill will help remedy that by enabling thousands of woodlot owners to recover capitalized reforestation expenses.

This step won't in itself solve our timber shortages. But it is a positive step to stimulate the production of more timber for the future. It would be an economic and environmental waste to do otherwise.

This legislation also recognizes the need to place a greater reliance on our own public timberland because depending on other nations is risky. It would use the receipts from timber import duties to create a trust fund aimed at speeding reforestation of public timberlands.

Both of these proposals will help achieve the forward-looking and imaginative goals set forth in a white paper delivered by the Senate Subcommittee on Forestry. That white paper foresees a 50-year goal for refurbishing public and private timberland. It projects drastically increasing wood-growing productivity, with a target of reaching 90 per cent of our timberland's potential by the year 2030, up from 60 per cent utilization now.

Clearly, today we can take the first step on the road to achieving higher productivity from our private and public timberlands. Clearly, today we can begin to reverse the decline of our forests that once graced our land from sea to shining sea. Clearly, today we can begin to show the attention to a precious natural resource that gives life to our nation and its people.

and jobs