

(Washington, DC) - **Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA) released the following statement regarding the announcement that Sierra Pacific Industries' has been forced to close its Quincy, CA small-log saw mill. The mill was built after the passage of the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act (QLG) in 1998, which was designed to increase tree thinning in national forests as a means to lower the risk of wildfires. As a result of the closure, which will occur on May 4, 2009, 150 workers will be affected by the shutdown. Herger's comments follow:**

"Yesterday, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) sadly announced the closure of its small-log saw mill in Quincy, California. SPI was forced to close the mill because of an ailing lumber market in conjunction with environmental litigation, making it nearly impossible to supply the mill and keep it running. After Congress just passed an enormous trillion dollar spending bill to stimulate the economy and create jobs, it is unacceptable that the employment of 150 hardworking individuals is being affected by frivolous environmental appeals and lawsuits. It is obvious that Sierra Pacific's decision was not made lightly, and I commend the company for investing in the QLG program and for doing all it can to help those individuals affected by the mill closure.

"Sierra Pacific Industries constructed this mill on the assumption that sufficient material would be available after passage of the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act over a decade ago. This bipartisan legislation was the result of a collaborative effort among local government, concerned citizens, the local environmental community, and timber industry representatives – in an attempt to get past the "timber wars" and bring commonsense management back to our national forests. Yet despite having passed the House of Representatives 429 to 1 and being signed into law by President Bill Clinton, the Quincy Library Group pilot project has been prevented from achieving its environmental protection and community stability goals because of the un-tethered actions of a minority of extreme activist groups. These groups have abused the appeals and environmental review process to stall and derail the implementation of this law since its enactment, thwarting the efforts of local citizens to protect themselves and their communities from the growing threat of catastrophic wildfires.

"I find it tragic that, with all of the emphasis on economic stimulus and environmental protection, a company such as Sierra Pacific is being forced to shutter its facilities and cut jobs. We should be doing all we can to incentivize our timber industry to thin these forests, reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires, create true 'green jobs,' and bring economic vitality to our rural communities.

“Between last year’s devastating fire season and yesterday’s mill closure, the abuse of the appeals process continues to wreak injustice on our Northern California forest communities. As long as litigation is allowed to delay and obstruct commonsense forest management activities, we will continue to see catastrophic wildfires destroy our forests, threaten our homes, and pollute our air.

“I will continue to fight for the reforms we need to prevent these abuses and allow us to restore our forests, protect our communities, and create jobs. I urge President Obama to support these much-needed reforms, help move us past this needless legal stalemate, and ensure that regrettable – and avoidable – situations like this one are prevented in the years ahead.”