

Senate gives nod to spotted owl compromise

Limits environmentalist appeals against tree sales

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate approved legislation Saturday to allow more logging of the Northwest's old-growth forests while protecting the rare spotted owl, the last step before the measure heads to President Bush for signing into law.

The compromise legislation was contained in a \$11.2 billion measure for the Interior Department, cultural and other programs, which was approved 91-6. The House approved the bill Tuesday, 391-41.

The measure will allow 9.6 billion board feet of timber to be sold in Northwest federal forests during the fiscal year that started last Sunday.

It also:
• Calls for 45-day expedited court reviews of timber-sale ap-

peals. Challenges to timber sales would have to be filed within 15 days and litigated within 30 days after that.

- Requires that about half the sales currently enjoined be released.
- Requires that federal agencies strive to preserve contiguous stretches of old-growth forest, rather than logging in a patchwork pattern of fragmented stands.
- Establishes seven-member advisory boards to review timber-sale programs in national forests in Washington and Oregon.

"Our state is not about to be clear cut from corner to corner," said Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., who voted in favor of the compromise.

"Our national forests belong to the many," countered Sen. Wyche Fowler, D-Ga. "They are not private tree farms for the few."

Environmentalists have reluctantly supported the one-year compromise. They have worked to block further logging of old-growth timber, using the rareness of the Northern spotted owl as a lever to protect the forests in which the birds live.

The timber industry has opposed extensive preservation, saying that eliminating forest land from the region's timber base will lead to closed mills, lost jobs and economic desolation for timber towns.

"This timber provision is the necessary first step in resolving the timber-supply crisis in the Northwest. This interim measure sets up a process which allows responsible harvesting of timber while protecting sensitive ecosystems and threatened

species," Sen. Brock Adams, D-Wash., told the Senate.

"We in the Washington delegation were not eager to intervene and run the forests," he added. "Unfortunately, such a step was necessary."

On the Senate floor, debate over the forest provisions was minimal. Instead, most atten-

Rep. Bob Smith, R-Ore., had accused Congress of caving into the demands of "radical" environmentalists, and said the legislation would result in a "substantial and grievous reduction" in harvest levels.

"This agreement is not the short-term panacea some would have you believe," Smith said.

'Our state is not about to be clear cut from corner to corner.'

— U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton

tion focused on a controversial section of the legislation that would give officials the power to deny federal grant money for artworks they believe may be obscene.

Earlier in the week, in the House, the timber provisions had a more difficult time.

claiming it would result in a 15 percent reduction in timber sales over the next 12 months, resulting in thousands of lost jobs.

But Reps. Les Aucoin, D-Ore., and Norman Dicks, D-Wash., noted that more than 100 House members had vowed to vote against the timber plan as it originally passed the Senate, before a conference committee worked out the compromise that eventually passed both houses.

Aside from the timber compromise, the appropriations bill also includes \$77.25 million for the Puyallup Indian Tribe land-claims settlement in the Tacoma area; \$2.2 million to purchase Madrona Point on Orcas Island, a site of historic importance to Washington's Lummi Indian Tribe; \$3.6 million for Spokane's Centennial Trail; and \$5.24 million for work in the Mount St. Helens national volcanic area.



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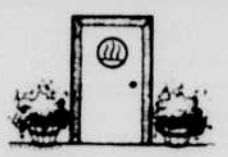
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