

Weaver says exported logs mean job losses at home

To the Editor:

The Oregon Legislature, under the able leadership of Representative Bill Bradbury, is attempting to bind an economic wound that is bleeding the Northwest's economy to death. I refer, of course, to the export from this region of two to three BILLION board feet of unmilled logs every year. With sawmills already standing idle because of high interest rates, we continue to allow the export of logs, instead of employment-producing lumber and plywood, to Japan and East Asia.

But let me review some of the

Food preservation seminar scheduled

Chip Bubl, county extension agent, reports that a canning and food preservation expert will conduct a demonstration and answer questions at the next regularly scheduled extension meeting here. The demonstration will last from 9:30 am to 12 noon at the West Oregon Co-op building on August 7. The public is encouraged to attend. Call 397-3462 for further information.

reasons why I feel so strongly about this issue. Every log that goes out of this country without being milled into finished lumber or plywood represents direct job losses suffered by our economy. Somewhere else workers will be turning our forest resources into high-value finished products and enriching their economy by that amount. It is incredible to think that we would make tax-funded investments in managing our public timber and then allow that public timber to be exported through a loophole in the law. The efforts of the state legislature to close that loophole by eliminating substitution of public timber for privately exported timber should be strongly supported.

But we ought to be concerned with the export of private timber as well. Exports from any source diminish the logs available to the northwest's mills and push the price up for stumpage. With all the cries about an impending timber shortage, echoed by many of the major timber exporting corporations, one would think these very same companies would require everyone else to do so. But, they don't, and it is obvious that private timber owners will not give up exporting logs until we close our

borders against the bleeding of this prized resource.

Within the Pacific Rim trading area, the northwest is blessed with a unique resource in its fine-grained, old growth sawtimber. Nowhere else is there the quality nor quantity of timber available here. If we banned log exports, the Japanese would not be able to replace that loss with Siberian timber as many exporters claim—the Russian timber is too difficult to access, is primarily low quality larch, and is encumbered with a host of political problems.

Further, New Zealand does not have the capacity to supply the volume needed by the Japanese, and the Far Eastern hardwoods do not have the qualities of our old-growth softwoods. Canadians could not replace our logs, either, because they have wisely banned the export of unprocessed logs since 1905. If, out of spite, the Japanese replaced the log volume we supplied with Canadian lumber imports, the northwest would still benefit. Since Canada now supplies the U.S. with 29 percent of the lumber we consume, a diversion of Canadian lumber to Japan would allow the northwest to supply a greater portion of the eastern U.S. market with lumber.

It is claimed that this is a free trade issue. Yet the Japanese subsidize their mills, and the U.S. gives tax benefits for log exports. Northwest millowners say they could cut lumber to Japanese specifications, pay the shipping costs, and still be competitive with the products of Japanese mills. But no one is willing to invest in such an operation when he or she knows that the Japanese will prefer to buy logs, and that trade barriers exist that prevent the free flow of U.S. milled lumber to Japan.

Log exporters say we should negotiate such issues, not legislate them. This is absolutely ludicrous! We have waited ten years for fruitless negotiations with the Japanese to result in any sustained or significant increase in exports of American finished lumber. The Japanese are willing to protect their workers and their small businesses by supplying them with logs at almost any cost. It is a political issue in Japan, and their politicians respond to their constituents.

At the same time, our mills sit idle, unprotected by elected officials and suffering from false arguments about free trade. The only ones to profit more from log exports than from lumber exports are the Japanese

monopoly trading companies, the big U.S. timber companies (who profit by the substitution loophole, and overcut their timberlands to make a quick, low-employment buck from exports), and thousands of Japanese millworkers.

I have always fought log exports, for the obvious reason that log exports equal job exports. If it were simply a matter of free trade, I might be willing to sit on the sidelines. But, anyone who thinks that the powerful corporations involved in log exporting—the Weyerhaeusers and Mitsui, the Crown Zellerbachs, Mitsubishi, Louisiana Pacifics and Sumitomos of this world—are "free traders", still believe in Santa Claus.

Regardless of much of the rhetoric clouding the issue, it is basically a few extremely powerful timber corporations using the present and future old-growth timber supplies of the northwest to augment their cash flows for their own benefit. While that's just fine for the corporation, it is not necessarily good for a healthy and diversified northwest timber industry—today or tomorrow.

The timber resources of the northwest—especially public timber resources—ought to serve the interests of the people and economy of the region. Public policy regarding log exports from any source should prevent the future impoverishment of the region's most important industry. That is why the efforts of Representative Bradbury and others in the Oregon Legislature are so important. Their work will help insure that the people who pay taxes to manage and maintain the productivity of Oregon State timberlands, will rightfully reap the consequent economic benefits. That is why I so strongly commend their efforts and why I will continue to fight this critically important issue on the federal level.

Jim Weaver
Member of Congress

'71 grads plan reunion

The Vernonia High School graduating class of 1971 will hold it's 10 year class reunion August 22, 1981, at the home of Rick and Shelly Curl. It will be a potluck affair from 3 pm to 8 pm. The class will also be inviting classmates from previous years and teachers. For more information, contact Marilyn Landers at 429-4543.

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