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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4020

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State of Washington                      52nd Legislature                      1991 Regular Session

By Representatives Jones, Bowman, Brumsickle, Basich, Hargrove, Heavey, Fuhrman, Braddock, Morton, H. Sommers, Lisk, Nealey, Schmidt, Wang, Jacobsen, Peery, Franklin, May, Ogden, Leonard, Prentice, Kremen, Anderson, Scott, Van Luven, Valle, Wineberry, D. Sommers, Haugen, Dorn, Rasmussen, R. Fisher, Cooper, Spanel, G. Fisher, Pruitt, Ferguson, R. Johnson, Brough, Phillips, Chandler, Wynne, Sheldon, P. Johnson and Tate.

Read first time March 7, 1991.

1            TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND  
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5            We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
7 represent and petition as follows:

8            WHEREAS, Changes in federal Forest Service management policies are  
9 leading to the loss of twenty thousand jobs in Washington state due to  
10 a decline in the federal timber supply; and

11            WHEREAS, Most of these timber-related jobs are located in rural  
12 areas of the state which have few economic alternatives. While the  
13 economy of our state's urban areas may be vibrant, our rural  
14 communities are suffering from impacts of the decline in timber supply.  
15 These rural, timber-dependent communities often do not have the  
16 economic diversity of the urban areas. Workers who lose their jobs are

1 frequently far away from jobs in other sectors of the economy and far  
2 away from training centers; and

3 WHEREAS, If the people of the United States feel that they need to  
4 make the decision to cut back on the federal timber supply they should  
5 be willing to pay the economic costs of that decision rather than  
6 attempt to shift the entire cost to the hardworking timber families in  
7 our state's rural communities; and

8 WHEREAS, Congress has provided other workers who have been impacted  
9 by federal decisions with adequate benefits to make the transition to  
10 other jobs. Coal miners impacted by the Clean Air Act and defense  
11 workers impacted by defense cuts received special benefits during the  
12 last Congressional session. No such benefits were provided for timber  
13 workers hurt by federal decisions; and

14 WHEREAS, Currently available job retraining programs fall short of  
15 the mark. They do not provide adequate funds for the long-term  
16 training which is needed for a transition to family wage jobs. They do  
17 not provide resources to allow workers to maintain their families while  
18 they are in training. They are severely lacking in the ability to meet  
19 emergency needs. As family emergencies happen, we often see workers  
20 drop out of their retraining programs and thus they are considered  
21 failures;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress  
23 pass a Timber Workers Fairness Act which will provide adequate benefits  
24 to timber workers impacted by federal decisions. The benefits should  
25 be similar to those provided to workers impacted by federal trade  
26 policies under the Trade Adjustment Act, and federal environmental  
27 policies under the Clean Air Act. The legislation should have the  
28 following components:

29 (1) A training program of adequate duration to provide a transition  
30 to family wage jobs;

1           (2) Training allowances to help families survive through the  
2 retraining program. The allowances should be available to self-  
3 employed individuals as well as people who have not worked enough hours  
4 to be eligible for Unemployment. Families eligible for unemployment  
5 insurance should be eligible for an extension of up to fifty-two weeks  
6 if they are participating in training;

7           (3) Provision of support services to provide for needs such as  
8 child care, transportation, and emergency medical services.

9           BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
10 transmitted to the Honorable George Bush, President of the United  
11 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
12 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
13 Washington.