

NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL PRESERVATION ACT

HEARING U.S. DEPOSITORY

BEFORE THE

DEC 17 1992

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

S. 2767

A BILL TO ASSURE THE PRESERVATION OF THE NORTHERN
SPOTTED OWL AND THE STABILITY OF COMMUNITIES
DEPENDENT ON THE RESOURCES OF THE PUBLIC LANDS IN
OREGON, WASHINGTON, AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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light come on, if you could start to wind up, and when the red light comes on, please draw to a conclusion.

Dr. Shaffer, why don't you proceed.

STATEMENT OF MARK L. SHAFFER, VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESOURCE PLANNING AND ECONOMICS, THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY, WASHINGTON, DC, ACCOMPANIED BY JEFF OLSEN, CHIEF ECONOMIST

Mr. SHAFFER. Thank you very much, Senator Chafee.

My name is Mark Shaffer. I'm Vice President for Resource Planning and Economics with the Wilderness Society, and I'm pleased to be here today and have this opportunity to share our views on S. 2762, the Northern Spotted Owl Preservation and Northwest Economic Stabilization Act of 1992. As you know, we are an environmental organization that has been active in the old-growth and spotted owl issues, and I'm pleased to represent our 300,000 members today.

I'll try to be very brief. We strongly oppose S. 2762, and we do so for three reasons: number one, it will fail to save the owl; number two, it will fail to save timber jobs at the rate that it claims—in fact, it may not, in the aggregate, save any jobs at all; and third, it's not going to solve the overall problem, which is the way we manage the late successional old-growth ecosystem in the Pacific Northwest. I'd like to elaborate just very briefly on those three points.

First of all, just yesterday we submitted very extensive comments on the draft recovery plan for the northern spotted owl. We feel, based on our very detailed review of the recovery plan, that there is some serious reason to question whether it in fact will preserve the owl and prevent its extinction. Now, as has already been established here this morning, the preservation plan that S. 2762 would implement provides far less protection than the draft recovery plan. Obviously, the criticisms we have of the recovery plan apply that much more strongly to the preservation plan. I'm not going to wade through all of those. We have attached a copy of our detailed comments for the committee's information. I think that it is a fair characterization to say that the environmental community views the so-called preservation plan as virtually assuring the extinction of the spotted owl.

Our second concern has to do with jobs, since a large part of the rationale for this bill is its purported claim to save something like 17,000 jobs in the timber sector of the Pacific Northwest economy. I think anybody who has been a serious student of this issue—timber, forest management of the Pacific Northwest, employment, and conservation—understands that the timber industry—and it was just discussed by some of the Government representatives—the timber industry in this region has been going through a transition for over a decade, and most of that transition has occurred long before the spotted owl was ever an issue. That's not to say that conservation of the spotted owl won't have some job impacts, but most of the employment loss that has occurred in that area so far has been due to strictly economic factors—increases in productivity and

decreases in the competitiveness of the timber industry in that sector.

So when we make projections that we're going to save 17,000 jobs by enacting this bill, we could find nowhere in the bill or in the preservation plan any substantiation that they've taken into account the increases in productivity that are going to continue, the downsizing that's going to continue in the timber industry. So to say that 17,000 jobs are going to be saved seems somewhat speculative.

The other thing that we know is that the big drain on log resources in the Pacific Northwest for the past decade has been the export of raw, unprocessed logs to foreign markets. Now, that exports jobs, and our own estimates are that if you could somehow restrict exports of raw logs from the Pacific Northwest, you could probably create about 18,000 additional jobs in the processing sector of the local timber economy. So if we're really interested—and I think we all need to be interested in the employment effects of this issue—if we're really interested in doing something that will be effective in maintaining or perhaps even increasing employment in the timber sector, then we have to focus on the right pressure point, and the right pressure point are log exports, not the decision about whether we allow the spotted owl to go extinct or not.

The third concern—somebody was talking about this issue has been around for a while. I've been involved one way or another with this for about 10 years. They used to call Mr. Reagan the "teflon president" because nothing would stick. I call the spotted owl the "velcro issue," because once you've had a brush with it, you can't get rid of it. I think we're all interested in a resolution to this problem, but I think we've also realized now for over a year that this is not just owls and it's not just jobs. It's about the management of an ecosystem, the broad-scale economic values that that ecosystem provides to our society as well as the regional economy, and how we're going to resolve these issues. You know, it's no longer just a question of owls versus jobs. It can very legitimately, as has been discussed here today, be viewed as an issue of timber jobs versus salmon jobs.

A lot of interests are at stake here, and we think that Congress recognized the broader dimensions of this debate last year when it convened the Portland Panel to develop a set of options for how to resolve the late successional old-growth issue in its entirety. There are two bills in Congress which we support. I hope I get the numbers right. It's S. 2895 and H.R. 4899. Both of these bills build on that Portland Panel process, and both of these bills, we think, are a much better alternative to really resolve this overall issue than what we view as a very flawed S. 2762.

Thank you.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Dr. Shaffer.

Mr. Draper.

Source: *Spotted Owl Preservation Act: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Environmental Protection of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, U.S. Senate, 102nd Cong. 48 (1992)*