

Published: 9 March 2011

Support for government move to ban illegal timber

In December 2010 the Australian government announced that it will introduce legislation restricting the import and sale of illegally logged timber. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries estimates that each year around \$400 million of Australia's forest products imports are derived from sources that have some risk of being illegally logged.



Credit: istockphoto

Humane Society International (HSI) is one of several organisations that have supported this move.

'Illegal logging in the Asia-Pacific region not only causes a major loss of biodiversity, it also results in a significant loss of income to the developing economies of the region and contributes to the loss of carbon stores,' says Mr Rod Holesgrove, HSI's Biodiversity Policy Officer.

The new legislation – which applies to all timber products, including sawn timber, wood panels, pulp, paper, wooden furniture and composite products – will require importers to meet a due diligence test.

However, Mr Holesgrove believes a chain-of-custody paper trail and verification of sources would help make the legislation more effective. 'We would also like to see increased support for the introduction of environmentally sustainable forest logging regimes in the region's developing countries, as dealing with illegally logged forest is only one aspect of stopping widespread deforestation and forest degradation,' he adds.

From ECOS online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC10057>