American Loggers Council Applauds Bipartisan Support for Future Logging Careers Act

U.S. House, Senate legislation allows 16- and 17-year-olds to work in mechanized logging operations under parental supervision

HEMPHILL, Texas (PRWEB) March 15, 2019 -- The American Loggers Council (ALC) today applauded the introduction of the bipartisan Future Logging Careers Act in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. The legislation amends the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to work in mechanized logging operations under parental supervision.

"As with many industries today, logging is facing a shortage of workers now and into the future," said ALC Executive Vice President Daniel Dructor. "It will be increasingly difficult for our industry to meet the strong domestic demand for lumber, paper, and other wood products essential for our nation. The Future Logging Careers Act is one solution will help the logging industry meet its future workforce needs while supporting small, family-owned businesses."

"We thank U.S. Senators Jim Risch (R-ID) and Angus King (I-ME) and U.S. Representatives Jared Golden (D-ME) and Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson (R-PA) for introducing this important legislation for America's loggers."

Dructor said the Future Logging Careers Act would extend an existing agricultural exemption, now enjoyed by family farmers and ranchers, to enable family-owned logging businesses to train their sixteen- and seventeen-year-old sons and daughters in mechanized timber harvesting. The exemption would ensure that the next generation of mechanized timber harvesters can gain the needed on-the-ground training and experience under the close supervision of their parents who have a vested interest in their children's safety and in passing down the profession to the next generation.

"Like farming and ranching, the timber harvesting profession is often a family run business where the practice and techniques of harvesting and transporting forest products from the forest to receiving mills is passed down from one generation to the next," Dructor said. "Timber harvesting operations are also very similar to family farms with sophisticated and expensive harvesting equipment that requires young family members to learn how to run the business, including equipment operation and maintenance, prior to reaching the age of eighteen."

The Future Logging Careers Act does not permit 16- and 17-year-olds the manual use of chain saws to fell and process timber, nor the use of cable skidders to bring the timber to the landing. This means the legislation is carefully written to give young loggers needed training with mechanized equipment and new technologies.

"As professional timber harvesters we are deeply committed to promoting safety in the woods, and on the roads, in the hope that someday logging is not included in the annual list of 'America's Most Dangerous Professions,' Dructor said. "To enable young loggers to learn the trade and safe practices in a supervised setting, we urge Congress to pass this important measure without delay."
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