

August 13, 2004

Greetings:

I'm hearing that the Department of Homeland Security is planning on implementing scores environmental exemptions for the sake of "National Security" in the coming weeks.

The Dept. of Homeland Security's proposed directive to allow FEMA, the Coast Guard and a host of other agencies to eschew environmental reviews and assessments required by the National Environmental Policy is a ludicrously transparent exploitation of the important issue of national security for the sake of lining the pockets of destructive businesses to the detriment of the environment and the safety of the American people

I believe sacrifices must be made for national security, but how we as a people are made safer by many of the proposed exemptions is highly suspect.

In its current form, the directive would permit logging of live trees on up to 70 acres and salvage logging projects on up to 250 acres on DHS-controlled lands without environmental review. Similarly, the Border Patrol would be allowed to build roads through national forests, forgoing public input entirely.

The directive would grant a categorical exclusion from NEPA reviews for the use of pesticides on all "buildings, roads, airfields, grounds, equipment, and other facilities" under DHS jurisdiction. And Homeland Security agencies across the board would be exempted from environmental reviews for dredging and repair activity within waterways and wetlands under their control.

Will we really be safer if the feds log more trees or spray more pesticides without having to consider how these actions effect citizens' groundwater, soil erosion/contamination, property values? Is any of this really going to prevent terrorist attacks on America? The answer is of course that it will not. Thank you, for caring more about pushing through an unrelated personal agenda under the despicable auspices of national security. I know these propositions do not need congressional approval, so I expect them to go through exactly as written, but please, if you believe in honesty and actually protecting American citizens, major changes must be made to this directive.

Sincerely,



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