

Archives II Nixon WHCF
John Whitaker box 35
folder Clearcutting

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 10, 1972

DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
E.O. 12558, Section 1.1

By ~~DATE~~ DATE, Date 10-2-85

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN D. EHRLICHMAN

FROM: John C. Whitaker *gcw*
SUBJECT: Clearcutting Initiative

At our meeting with Morton and Train on environmental initiatives, we decided to go ahead with the drafting of a proposed Presidential Executive Order that would win us points with the environmentalists while not disturbing either the present practice in the Forest Service, or the economy. The idea was that the environmentalists would be asuaged with language like "clearcutting will be banned except"

The timber and forest products industry, who have now gotten wind of the proposed Order through Fred Seaton's panel, are united in their opposition to such an Order. They believe that, by appearing to put clearcutting on the defensive, the effect of the Order will be to stir up environmental litigation, to inflate the price of lumber by stimulating panic buying, and to restrict 1972 sales by the Forest Service. They are absolutely unconvinced by our arguments that such an Order would postpone even more obnoxious legislation, and would dampen down on lawsuits by stating government policy positively and explicitly. Indeed, I think they are unmoved by the argument that the Executive Order merely restates present Forest Service practices because they are nearly as unhappy with present practices as they are with the Order.

While I don't necessarily buy all of their arguments of economic catastrophe and political backlash, I think that the uniform opposition of both all of the industry and the applicable labor unions

CONFIDENTIAL

may have the effect of making their gloomy forecast a self-fulfilling prophecy. Although I think we must assume that at this stage the environmentalists are as aware of the draft Order as are industry, and we are sure to set off a negative reaction similar to the one we went through last year when we pulled back the Wilderness Executive Order, I think we should not propose the Order this year. A softer Executive Order along the lines of "clearcutting is a good practice where...", which would be less offensive to the industry, would merely make both sides mad at us.

The waves that the leak of this initiative has caused thus far range from the industry and trade association, and their trade unions, to Wendell Wyatt and even Senators Packwood and Hatfield. When the latter two - ardent environmentalists from a timber state - start sounding like the Forest Products Association, I think we're on the wrong side of this one.

RECOMMENDATION

That we drop any pronouncement on clearcutting from this year's Environmental Message. Earl Butz, the Forest Service, OMB and the developers within Interior (Harrison Loesch) concur. CEQ would vote strongly to override industry's objections.

Approve C Disapprove _____ See Me _____

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, U.S. FOREST SERVICE

DATE: 1/11/77
 FROM: [Illegible]
 SUBJECT: [Illegible]

[The remainder of the memorandum text is illegible due to heavy noise and bleed-through.]