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Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Draws Criticism from Environmental Groups

SFI Board Meeting Met with Protest in Austin; Environmentalists Call Certification Scheme a 'Sham'

Austin, Texas - Members of the Don't Buy SFI coalition (www.dontbuysfi.org) demonstrated outside the annual meeting of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) where representatives of the timber industry were meeting at the Omni Hotel in downtown Austin. The coalition was there to draw attention to the fact that the SFI certifies forest destruction.

"We are here today to expose the Sustainable Forestry Initiative for what it is, the timber industry's phony certification scheme," said Melissa Stringfellow of Texas based environmental group, SACRED. "I can not believe that the timber industry chooses to betray the American people's trust by slapping a green label on products that cause the destruction of endangered forests worldwide. The SFI's certification of companies like Pacific Lumber, which is logging the world's last remaining ancient redwood forests, shows how bankrupt the SFI is."

The American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA), a timber industry trade group, created the SFI label in an attempt to greenwash destructive forestry practices. SFI "certified" companies, such as Weyerhaeuser, and Pacific Lumber, destroy forests and wildlife habitat by using practices like:

- Logging or buying wood from old-growth or endangered forests
- Replacing natural forests with ecologically barren pine plantations and sprawl
- Using large clearcuts, toxic herbicide spraying, and other harmful logging practices

"The SFI's standards and governance need more than tinkering, they need to be completely overhauled," said Daniel Hall on behalf of the Don't Buy SFI coalition. "The SFI needs to become truly independent, and stop allowing practices like the conversion of natural forests to plantations, logging of endangered species' habitats, and liquidation style clearcutting if it ever hopes to be credible as a certification system."

The SFI fails to include many elements environmentalists consider necessary for credible certification and product labeling. Among other things, the SFI's standards fail to adequately protect old growth, endangered forests, endangered species, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and natural forest characteristics necessary for ecosystem function. They also fail to protect communities and indigenous peoples' rights. Furthermore, the SFI allows labels on wood and paper products from forests that have not even met the SFI's own weak standards, and do not disclose the products' real contents.

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In February 2004, a coalition of leading environmental groups including American Lands Alliance, Dogwood Alliance, Rainforest Action Network, SACRED, and others launched the Don't Buy SFI coalition and a consumer campaign to educate American consumers about the truth behind the timber industry's phony new SFI eco-label. For more information visit: www.dontbuysfi.com

For a series of fact sheets detailing the pitfalls of SFI, including an overview, background on member companies, loopholes and a comparison between SFI and FSC, visit the [Dogwood Alliance press room](#).