

Remarks to Vaagen Brothers Lumber Employees in Colville,
Washington
September 14, 1992

The President. Thank you all very much. What a wonderful welcome. May I thank your very special Senator, Senator Slade Gorton, for that introduction and much more for all he does for this great State back in Washington, DC. You have an outstanding Senator. And thanks to Duane Vaagen and all of the rest of you for letting us visit here today. I know we've disrupted not only this wonderful facility but a lot of things around town. I'm grateful to the Mayor, Mayor Scott, and the police officials and everybody else who assist in the planning and the success of a visit like this.

I'll tell you, I really enjoyed flying in here in that helicopter. For those of you who haven't been up there, there are a lot of trees around here. So don't listen to some of the critics—[*applause*].

You know, last week out in Detroit, I released an Agenda for American Renewal. I see a sign back there on that. The agenda was based on a fundamental premise: that the challenges America faces, foreign, domestic, and economic, and yes, environmental, are connected; they're linked. The solution to one cannot be divorced from the solution to the other. We need an integrated approach.

We need to bring this integrated approach to the relationship between the economy and the environment. Environmental protection and economic growth must go hand in hand; they can't be divorced from each other. This morning down in southern California, I spoke about ways to bring them together. But frankly, I believe that when it comes to the Endangered Species Act and its application here in the Northwest, the balance has simply been lost.

Like many of you, I love to hunt and hike and fish. I love the outdoors. Like you, I have learned through a lifetime of experience to appreciate and respect the wilderness. I know that you, and you who have chosen to live in this beautiful part of the country, respect and revere these forests

as others never can. You resent the implication that earning your livelihood here, with sound management of the forest, makes you less of a conservationist than the city dweller or the suburbanite.

I'm proud of this record, although I don't have the endorsement of some of the extreme environmental groups. But for the past 4 years, we've worked hard to protect our precious environment, and we've accomplished a great deal. Four years ago, I promised Americans a new Clean Air Act. For over a decade, no one could get it done, but we did. My Clean Air Act reduces smog in our cities and gets toxic pollutants out of the air and will cut acid rain in half.

Four years ago, I promised I would protect the environmentally sensitive areas off our coasts from the excesses of offshore drilling. Today, there will be no drilling off the coast of California or Washington and Oregon, not far from here, off the Florida Keys, off the New England coast. We have banned ocean drilling until the year 2000.

Four years ago, I promised to be a good steward of our public lands, and we've added thousands of miles of trails for Americans like you who love the outdoors. We're reopening and upgrading campsites all across America. We've added a million and a half acres to our national parks, wildlife areas, forests, and recreation lands.

The fact is that every American cares about the environment, and most consider themselves environmentalists. That is particularly true here in the Pacific Northwest. Yet Americans today realize that we can protect our lands while also using them for people's benefit. They understand the need for wilderness and recreation areas, as well as the need for paper for our schools and offices and timber for new homes.

Being out here in the great Pacific Northwest, I'm reminded of Teddy Roosevelt, the very first President to focus the attention of the Nation on the condition of our natural resources. Teddy Roosevelt once said this, "Wise forest protection does not mean the

withdrawal of forest resources from contributing their full share to the welfare of the people.” What President Roosevelt had in mind, and what the American people have always wanted, is balance.

Not far from here is a timber town called Forks. Like Colville, Forks supported a mill, and the mill supported a community. Because of a lack of timber, the mill had to close. Today unemployment in Forks is at 20 percent. The car dealership has closed; the clothing store, gone; the movie theater, shut down. Domestic violence complaints have doubled, just in the past year. Forks is in crisis for a simple reason: The balance that I was talking about, that balance has been lost. I’ve come here because we must restore the balance.

Listen to Oregon’s Senator Mark Hatfield, who was a cosponsor of the original Endangered Species Act back in 1972. This year, he wrote, “There is no question that the act is being applied in a manner far beyond what any of us envisioned when we wrote it 20 years ago.” The Endangered Species Act was intended as a shield for species against the effects of major construction projects like highways and dams, not a sword aimed at jobs and families and communities of the entire regions like the Northwest.

But today, when harvesting on Federal timberland is stopped outright by 13 different lawsuits, under 7 different statutes, each inconsistent with the other, the balance has been lost. It’s time to fight for jobs, families, and communities. The time has come to talk sensibly. When hundreds of mills have been shut down, thousands of timber workers thrown out of work, and revenues for schools and other local services have been slashed, the balance has been lost. It’s time to fight for jobs, families, and communities.

So, as I say, we must talk sense about the Endangered Species Act, about the spotted owl, and about the management of our forests, because it is my firm belief that people and their jobs deserve protection, too.

Audience member. What about AIDS?

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me digress for one minute. Let me digress. This man has asked a question here. I hadn’t planned to discuss

this. His question is—if you’ll listen, sir, I’ll explain to you what about AIDS. AIDS is a serious problem. Under my administration we’ve appropriated \$4.3 billion, ten times as much per victim as for cancer. We’ve asked for \$4.9 billion. We are the leaders in research, and we’re going to keep on fighting until we get this thing whipped.

Now, let me go back to the Endangered Species Act. And let me be clear. The basic purpose of the Endangered Species Act is good and noble, to save the rare and threatened species of this country. But today, the act and other laws are being used by people with extreme views, particularly here in Washington and Oregon, to achieve in the courts what no sane official would ever have voted for, the complete lockup of the most productive forests in the entire United States.

The Endangered Species Act, as rigidly interpreted by some courts and as driven by the Congress, has forced an extreme approach and created an unnecessarily tragic situation here in the Northwest. Massive areas of Federal land are being set aside for the owl, virtually ignoring the fact that two-thirds of the Northwest’s old-growth forests are already designated as parks, wilderness, or other classifications that prevent harvesting. Each pair of owls—listen, America—gets 3,500 acres to itself, while jobs, families, and communities are being wiped out in the process.

The other side has been talking about a “false choice.” They claim that this timber crisis is just politics, and the simple fact is this: The false choice is being driven by extremists who are twisting the Endangered Species Act and its application to the northern spotted owl. So I came up here to set the record straight. Let’s do that for the entire country, right here. We have always worked within the parameters of the law to address this problem. But I can tell you this: The law is broken, and it must be fixed.

We have asked the United States Congress for funds to cut enough timber in this region to keep people employed. But these conflicting laws allow challenge after challenge. So this year we sent Congress an alternative plan, a preservation plan that would save 17,000 jobs compared to the recovery plan required by the act. And

Congress has simply failed to act.

My friends, it is time to consider the human factor in the spotted owl equation. My opponent talks about putting people first. Well, we can start right here in the Pacific Northwest.

So, here's what I propose. Here's what I propose:

First, I will not sign an extension of the Endangered Species Act unless it gives greater consideration to jobs and to families and to communities, too. I will not sign it without a specific plan in place to harvest enough timber to keep timber families working in 1993 and beyond. It is time to make people more important than owls.

Second, I will fight to end the injunctions that have put an economic stranglehold on the Northwest, in order to free up the timber that we need today, because the families and the timber communities of the Pacific Northwest need relief now. And I call upon Congress to pass my plan to produce 2.6 billion board feet of timber from Forest Service lands in the Northwest region next year and to pass language that prevents lawsuits from stopping reasonable harvests with reasonable species protection. It is time to put people ahead of process.

Third, my administration will speed the harvesting of dead or dying timber that has been dangerously building up during a 7-year drought. One step is our new rule to allow more timber salvage operations to occur without triggering some of the time-consuming requirements that are blocking progress. This will reduce the risk of fire. It'll provide up to 450 million board feet of timber for the mills in the near term. And it's time, then, to protect jobs with timber that's available now.

Fourth, we will make sure that 100 percent of the raw logs from Washington State-owned public lands are processed here. It's time to put the mills back to work.

Finally, I call upon Congress to pass the spotted owl preservation plan, and that's Senator Gorton's bill which he calls "The Northern Spotted Owl Preservation and Northwest Economic Stabilization Act of 1992." It's time to preserve both owls and jobs. That's what Slade Gorton's act does, and he helps the families in the process.

Now, the Senator mentioned my oppo-

nent, so I will, too. [Laughter] My opponent's approach to this problem, to your jobs, is double-speak. When Bill Clinton spoke in Pennsylvania, he said what the Sierra Club wanted to hear. They concluded that Governor Clinton was, quote, "promising the protection of old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest." And then, when he heard I was coming here, Mr. Clinton cynically held out false hope to timber families by promising, get this, another meeting.

There have already been more than 40 bipartisan meetings of the Northwest congressional delegation on this issue for 3 years. Now, here, you wondered what these are? These are the studies. Look at them. We don't need any more studies of this problem. We need action in the United States Congress. Good heavens, we've produced a pile of studies and proposals this high. The best thing for the timber industry is all the trees it took to print these reports. No more studies. Let's change the law. Let's change the law.

The difference on this is clear. The difference on this is clear. It's as simple as this: My opponent will not fight to change the law to restore balance. And now I know that he's getting famous for being on both sides of every issue. Do you want to know the real views of the other ticket? Senator Gore wrote it in black and white in his book before he knew that he'd be looking for your votes.

In his book, Senator Gore said this, and I quote, "I helped lead the successful fight to prevent the overturning of protections for the spotted owl." And Senator Gore wrote, and I quote, "the jobs will be lost anyway." I challenge Governor Clinton: Do you agree with your running mate? Do you endorse the book that you once called "magnificent"?

It is time we worried not only about endangered species but about endangered jobs, jobs in the timber industry and in agriculture, and in transportation and in recreation as well. All of those are threatened by the Endangered Species Act.

I have come here to tell you that I am a candidate who will respect wildlife, yes, but who will also fight for jobs and families and

communities. And I have come here to tell you that I will not stand for a solution that puts at least 32,000 people out of work. I can tell you, that solution will not stand.

I have come here to tell you that we haven't forgotten about the human factor. Because in the end, no matter how you look at it, that's the most important factor of all.

I have come here today to tell you that we can restore the balance, and we must

restore the balance. And with your help, we will restore the balance.

Thank you, and may God bless you. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

Note: The President spoke at 1:09 p.m. at Vaagen Brothers Lumber, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to Duane Vaagen, president of the company.

Remarks to Burrill Lumber Employees in Medford, Oregon

September 14, 1992

The President. Mike, thank you, sir. Thank you very—He's getting our props ready for this presentation. [*Laughter*] Now, thank you so much, Mike, for the introduction. Thanks to your wonderful dad and to the entire Burrill family and all of you for letting me visit here today.

Last week in Detroit, I released my Agenda for American Renewal. And the agenda was based on a fundamental premise: that the challenges that America faces, foreign, domestic, economic, and yes, environmental, are connected. The solution to one cannot be divorced from the solution to the other, and we need an integrated approach.

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Then, 4 years ago, I promised to be a good steward of our public lands. We have added thousands of miles of trails for Americans like you who love the outdoors, and we're reopening and upgrading campsites all across this great country. We've added a million and a half acres to our national parks and wildlife areas and forests and recreation lands.

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