

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2007

Contact:

Kris Genovese, Defenders of Wildlife, 202-772-3234

Martin Wagner, Earthjustice, 510-550-6700

David Waskow, Friends of the Earth, 202-492-4660

Virginia Cramer, Sierra Club, 202-675-6279

Statement by Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club regarding Trade and Environment Deal

It is time for a fundamentally new direction for our trade policy. We commend the Democratic leadership for achieving important environmental progress in the Peru and Panama Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), particularly by requiring enforcement of certain environmental treaties and by addressing trade in illegally-logged timber, especially mahogany. The timber-related provisions can be particularly important for Peru's Amazon region, one of the most biologically diverse areas on the planet and home to thousands of endangered and threatened species.

While we are encouraged by the progress made on environmental concerns, we will evaluate the entire text of the Peru and Panama FTAs once the agreements are finalized in negotiations to assess their implications for environmental protection. We also strongly believe that environmental protections and protections for worker rights and human rights must go hand-in-hand.

Indeed, this is just the start of a process to ensure that trade agreements support, rather than undermine, environmental protection. Although last week's agreement reflects progress on environmental issues in the Peru and Panama FTAs, it is not a sufficient template for trade agreements generally or for presidential trade negotiating authority. FTAs will still provide foreign corporations the right to directly attack public health and environmental measures, and will not fully protect environmental laws from other trade challenges.

There is much work to be done to achieve the reforms of both substance and process necessary to make U.S. trade policy consistent with sustainable development and environmental protection. We will therefore vigorously oppose any efforts to extend or renew the current model of negotiating authority.

President Bush has established the worst environmental record in modern history, particularly on matters of worldwide concern such as global warming. In light of the administration's six years of inaction on and disregard for pressing environmental concerns, we will examine closely whether it is sincere in moving forward on trade and environmental protection.

###