



Republicans: Focus on Job Creation, Not Just Boosting Federal Employee Morale

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On Thursday, March 19th, the Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands will hold an oversight hearing entitled "*Restoring the Federal Public Lands Workforce*" to examine "issues related to the morale and effectiveness" of federal employees.

While most Americans would hope that federal employees are happy in their jobs, it's hard to understand why Democrats in Congress believe that this topic should be examined when the national employment rate is 8.1 percent. As over 12.5 million unemployed Americans search for jobs, should Members of Congress actually focus their efforts on examining the morale of people who currently hold safe, stable jobs with great benefits?

Unfortunately, this hearing is another example of Democrats' misplaced priorities.

Instead of studying the morale of people who have good jobs, Republicans believe Congress should examine ways to help unemployed Americans. Today, Ranking Member Doc Hastings, Subcommittee Ranking Member Rob Bishop, and Rep. Wally Herger sent the attached letter to Chairman Nick Rahall and Subcommittee Chairman Raul Grijalva requesting an oversight hearing on the decline of the U.S. timber industry and the continuing loss of timber-related jobs.

While the number of federal employees has grown significantly over the years, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the logging, wood, paper, and cabinetry industry has lost 242,000 jobs, or roughly 23 percent of its workforce since 2006.

And just yesterday:

- The Swanson Group, headquartered in Glendale, Oregon [announced](#) that it is reducing production at its stud mill in Roseburg, Oregon, from 50 hours per week to 20 hours per week and laying off over 100 employees. "These decisions are the result of the housing slump and the overall economic crisis that is affecting the entire country," the company stated in a press release.
- Weyerhaeuser Co., North America's largest lumber producer, [announced](#) it will close lumber mills in Oklahoma and Oregon, affecting 307 workers. "Demand for wood

products continues to decline due to a slowdown in the housing market. Extraordinarily weak market conditions in the homebuilding industry require that we take decisive action,” said Tom Gideon, a Weyerhaeuser executive vice president.

- Sierra Pacific Industries [announced](#) it will reduce production at its Arcata plant, laying off 48 employees. This follows the recent announcement by California Redwood Co. and Green Diamond Resource Co. that they are eliminating 85 positions. According to the Eureka Times-Standard, “That's more than 130 local timber jobs gone in eight days.”

As Democrats consider this request, it’s important for them to remember that the 1.08 million people in various segments of the wood and paper industry represent a larger share of U.S. employment than the automobile industry (828,500 as of November, 2008).

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