

# Committee on Resources

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**Prepared Statement for the Record of  
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Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council  
February 4, 2004  
"Issues Affecting Jobs in the Forest Industry"  
Before the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health  
Resource Committee  
United States House of Representatives**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman. My name is Dale Lovett. I'm a Special Projects Coordinator for the Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council (PPRC) and a twenty year employee at the MeadWestvaco Corporations' Papers Group mill in Wickliffe, KY and a proud member of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union.

I want to begin by thanking the Chairman for extending the invitation to share our concerns about Americas Forest Product Industry. The PPRC takes great pride in having established a credible reputation for helping work through many environmental issues and we're privileged to have our voice heard by our nation's leaders.

As I began to gather my thoughts about what to say today, I couldn't help but remember what the early members of the PPRC were told during their first visit to Washington. They were told by a Congressman, and I quote, "If you people had half a brain you would go home and find yourself a new line of work, because in the next ten years we're going to shut down all heavy industry in this country." Well, I guess the good Congressman didn't realize papermakers don't have half a brain, we have whole brains. And we're still here.

Over the last decade our industry has made tremendous investments in our mills to stay competitive and we still pay 20 percent more in salaries than manufacturing in other leading nations we compete with. That's something when you take this into account the rising cost of litigation we face, escalating health care costs, excessive environmental regulation, over-taxation when compared to competing nations, and the trade barriers and other protective policies practiced by foreign governments. Despite all of that, for the most part, we still out-compete our competitors. With great pride, I can tell you the American worker is still the most productive worker in the world and coupled with our wealth of natural resources in America, we're still holding on. But we're not sure how much longer we can hold on, without some relief.

We're now seeing the effects of our domestic pressures in the global economy. We've lost three million manufacturing jobs in the last three years with the closure of paper mills and other manufacturing sector operations across the U.S. We need to recognize that in the world marketplace we're going to have to size up our ability to compete...looking at the added costs we pay.

Over the last decade we've went up against many obstacles that have threatened our existence. I have some brief examples of how attempts to change public policy and regulation have posed considerable risk to the competitiveness of my industry.

- In the early 90's our industry entered into a working relationship with the EPA to develop new regulations concerning both the air and water emissions from bleached pulp & paper mills. But when the 1993 proposal was released by the EPA, we were faced with the possibility of having to adopt methods that would cost the industry 11.5 billion dollars, shutter 33 mills and eliminate 86,000 jobs. I'm glad to have been a small part of the solution that resulted in the EPA adopting recommendations that achieved the original goal but only cost 2.8 billion.

- In the mid nineties, an anti-forestry referendum was put on the ballot in the state of Maine that would have essentially ended the practice of forestry there, if passed. This ballot measure, proved costly. While public

opinion ultimately decided that forestry is necessary and beneficial, the numerous campaigns we waged to defeat these measures diverted precious capital that could otherwise have been spent on plant upgrades or other efforts to make our mills more competitive. After the election, a newspaper reported one of the referendum supporters as saying "It's really not that important the ballot initiative didn't pass. If we can make investors wary of coming to Maine for the sake of timber, we've won our battle."

- In 1999, once again the EPA set its sights on escalating another regulation with its revision to The Clean Water Act's, TMDL regulation. The major flaw in this reg. was its intention to designate forestry activity as a "point source" for run off into our streams and rivers. They wanted to make "forestry" the same as a sewer pipe. If implemented as originally intended the regulation would have required federal permits prior to any type of silviculture activity on private property. Thus increasing costs, causing administrative delays and subjecting sound sustainable forestry to potential legal challenges. PPRC members and many of our friends from all across the nation attended public hearings concerning the matter and the outcry forced the administration to withdraw the regulation due to the lack of public support and from broad bipartisan opposition on Capitol Hill.

- More recently we've been dealing with the EPA's New Source Review permit program for industrial air emissions. Under NSR, many simple process changes or routine maintenance that could reduce emissions and improve efficiency has been avoided because they might trigger violations. Think about it, anytime you have a regulation that's over 4,000 pages long and is open to interpretive guidance, nothing is certain. If we have to wait for a permit to be issued from the federal government before implementing a change, we were looking at an 18 month window just to get the ok. I am glad to report that we support the latest efforts to reform NSR and have worked tirelessly the past few years to help build the momentum needed to initiate the necessary changes.

The PPRC and PACE, my union, have worked together with this industry on these efforts and we are very much united concerning these issues. Win or lose on each and every issue we take on, we have to stay in the arena during the years ahead.

There is no single piece of legislation that can address all of our problems. But there are some things we can do that will make a difference.

The most important thing we can do is to recognize that making environmental improvements as dictated by our government, add to the bottom line. And the cost of manufacturing in the United States is rising sharply, in large measure because of costs related to regulations.

I believe we have to change the way we look at industrial processes and change the way we look at writing regulations that reduce all emissions. To build flexibility into meeting regulatory mandates would be a good beginning. Allowing those who understand the operations of a facility to develop ways to meet our environmental goals without mandating the fix, could pay dividends beyond imagination. Americans have a knack at being innovative. It's the single thing that has made us what we are today. Please help us keep America strong, by helping us maintain our competitiveness in the global economy.

Thank You

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Dale Lovett

Education Graduated High School  
May 1976  
Marshall County High School

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Professional Experience

Employed at the MeadWestvaco, Papers Group, Pulp & Paper Mill in Wickliffe, KY since July 1984.

Worked in Finishing Dept., Pulp Dryer, Coater and Maintenance Departments

Currently serving my third year as Industrial Maintenance Technician apprentice.

Elected as Vice-President, Recording Secretary and Department Steward for United Paperworkers International Union Local Union 680, Wickliffe, KY during the years 1988 – 1996

Appointed to the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Local Union 5-0680 Political Action Committee from 2000 to present

Elected as Special Projects Coordinator at Large for the Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council 1999 to Present

Elected to the position as Recording Secretary for the Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council 2000, 2001 & 2003

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