



For Immediate Release
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Judge Lifts Timber Contract Suspension Order Effective at 10:30 PDT Today

Portland, OR - Oregon Federal District Court Judge Panner today issued a nationwide [Order](#) immediately lifting suspensions of all federal timber contracts. The Order is effective as of 10:30 a.m. PDT.

“We are very pleased that the Judge has recognized the need for our workers to get immediately back in the woods producing logs for our mills to run this winter and providing revenue to the federal government,” said Tom Partin, President of American Forest Resource Council, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

Earlier in the day, letters were issued by the [Forest Service](#) and the [Bureau of Land Management](#) directing contracting officers to immediately begin notifying contractors that suspension orders were being lifted because the government shutdown has ended. However, certified letters for each contract could take days to prepare and to reach the purchasers. The Judge decided to issue a temporary restraining order so that work could resume on all contracts immediately. The Judge noted the importance of taking advantage of fall weather when the woods are accessible to build a log deck before winter snows and rains. “Scheduling loggers, particularly with helicopters is vital given their limited availability and every day counts.” Partin said.

“We simply cannot understand why the agencies felt it was appropriate to suspend timber contracts during the government shutdown in the first place,” Partin said. “Contractors work under pre-approved timber sale operations designed to protect government and private property and the environment.” Many of the contracts are designed to protect property by reducing heavy fuel loads in overgrown forests. “Throughout the process we have argued with the Government that the suspension orders were without merit. This ruling vindicates that position. The sad thing is that while Government employees will earn back pay there is little likelihood that logging or mill employees affected by the illegal suspensions will have any way to recoup their lost income.”

“The suspensions just made things harder for everyone in a situation that was already difficult. Partin said.

Timber contractors are expected to return to work immediately.

The American Forest Resource Council represents forest product manufacturers and landowners throughout the west and is based in Portland, Oregon. www.amforest.org

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