

UK Adds to Environment Bill In Hopes of Cracking Down on Deforestation

The UK is cracking down on illegal deforestation. They are demanding raw materials be sourced more carefully. A new rule was recently added to the UK's environment bill. Businesses are now barred from selling products made with any component obtained through a breach of local laws.



Illegal logging accounts for 50-90% of all forestry activities.

As we've seen, mass clearance like this poses serious risks to climate, biodiversity, and food security, degrading the world's ecosystems. This land-mark legislation hopes to transform how we protect all forests. It's an effort to lead as an example for the rest of the world as deforestation climbs to alarming rates. Interpol states that Illegal logging accounts for 50-90% of all forestry activities.

The world's largest driver of deforestation...

The international beef and leather trades is the largest driver of clear cutting in the Amazon. According to Greenpeace, the cattle sector in the Brazilian Amazon "makes it the world's largest driver of deforestation, responsible for more forest loss than the total deforestation in any country outside Brazil except Indonesia."

One of the most important pieces of legislation...

After months of delay due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Environment Bill welcomed back to Parliament. Environment Minister Rebecca Pow says it's "one of the most important pieces of legislation for a generation, and it's essential that we complete its passage into law as soon as possible so that we can continue our work to transform society and improve our air, water and nature."

Some feel these new rules are insufficient and may prove difficult to enforce.

Products such as soy, beef, palm oil and leather are still difficult to trace back to their origin. One Friends of the Earth campaigner told The Independent that managing where companies source is "the very least we should be able to expect". Even with larger companies doing their due diligence, she feels the bill does not take into account "weak local laws".

Brazil deforestation rose 50%...under President Jair Bolsonaro, a strident climate change denier.

In Brazil, deforestation rose 50 percent from the previous year under President Jair Bolsonaro, a strident climate change denier. As Joe Biden prepares for office in the US, he vowed to take action against the destruction of Brazil's rainforest. Bolsonaro warned Biden that he will respond to the US with "gunpowder" and not just "saliva" if Washington imposes economic sanctions on the country over deforestation in the Amazon.

We need to focus on demand.

Greenpeace representative Elena Polisano, feels the country's efforts are "deeply flawed" adding her own solution to the problem. She believes we need to focus on demand by targeting companies like Tesco, who she says sells more soya than any other British retailer. Polisano adds, "They must reduce the amount of meat and dairy they sell and drop forest destroyers from their supply chain immediately."