

August 17, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President today signed S. 2296 -- the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974. The bill authorizes and directs the Secretary of Agriculture to make renewable resource assessments and develop renewable resource programs for planning and budgeting purposes within the National Forest System.

S. 2296 authorizes and directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an elaborate long-range planning and budgeting system concerning all National Forest System renewable resources. In addition to the new long-range planning aspects of the bill, it has the effect of increasing Congressional involvement in Forest Service planning. The major features of S. 2296, which become effective for fiscal year 1977, are summarized below:

1. Requires the preparation of a Renewable Resource Assessment which includes: supply and demand analysis; inventory of present and potential renewable resources; a description of Forest Service programs and responsibilities; and, a discussion of factors affecting the use, ownership, and management of forest, range and other associated lands.
2. Directs the development and submission to the President of a Renewable Resource Program which includes alternative approaches for protection, management, and development of the National Forest System under the principles of multiple-use and sustained-yield.
3. Requires submission by the President to the Congress of the Assessment, Program, and a detailed "Statement of Policy," the latter "intended to be used in framing budget requests by that Administration" for the Forest Service, beginning in January of 1976 and thereafter following each updating' either House of the Congress could disapprove the Statement of Policy by resolution and the Congress could revise or modify it by law.
4. Directs explanation by the President of the specific reasons for the lesser program, in any of his budget requests for the Forest Service that are less than called for in the Congressionally approved Statement of Policy.

5. Mandates the elimination by the year 2000 of all work backlogs for the renewable resources of the National Forest System so that intensive multiple-use sustained-yield management will be possible throughout the system -- annual budget requests must be made at a level to remove such backlogs.

6. Places private operator costs for contract road building in connection with timber sales and operations within the Federal budget totals, and apparently requires that the levels of such road building be provided for in appropriation acts.

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