

Dear Representative _____

In President Obama's recent speech on job creation he said "...I agree that there are some rules and regulations that put an unnecessary burden on businesses at a time when they can least afford it. That's why I have ordered a review of all government regulations. So far, we've identified over 500 reforms which will save billions of dollars over the next few years"

One piece of regulation which deserves serious review is the Lacey Act. I agree with the impetus for this law; to end illegal logging, poaching and the destruction of the earth's endangered forests. But this Act is so vague and impossible to comply with, that it is having devastating effects on one of America's most culturally precious and iconic industries; guitar manufacture.

You might be aware that recently (8/24/2011) armed Fish and Wildlife enforcement agents raided the Gibson Guitar Company at several of their Tennessee facilities. I do not want to belabor the details in this letter, but several points should be brought to your attention concerning this event:

- 1) The woods under investigation in this raid, Indian Rosewood and Ebony, are not endangered or protected.
- 2) The Indian government has explicitly confirmed that the export of blanks cut specifically for guitar manufacture (what Gibson uses), are legal to export from India under Indian law.
- 3) The wood that Gibson imported and uses is the same type of wood (species, size), and was imported in the exact same manner, as all the other American guitar manufacturers -as well as the American guitar wood suppliers who supply smaller companies, and individual guitar makers and repair people (luthiers).
- 4) If Fish and Wildlife's errant interpretation of Indian law were to become accepted as true, it would in one fell swoop cripple an entire industry; one that has contributed greatly to our nation's culture and identity and is the envy of the world. Strangely, Asian made wood products (where the wood is certainly of dubious legality) is relatively simple to import into the US and these products can be found in common outlets like Wal-Mart.
- 5) The wording of the Lacey Act makes it nearly impossible for working musicians to travel across our borders with their instruments unless they have excessively burdensome paperwork listing the particular woods in their instruments. The customs and border patrol people examining these instruments will not be able to feasibly gain the expertise to evaluate the legality of artifacts made from wood.

I am writing in the hopes that you will work to:

- 1) Allow Gibson Guitars an opportunity to exonerate itself. At this point in time, it has not been charged with anything nor has it been given the opportunity to defend itself in court.

2) Pursue amendments to the Lacey Act that will maintain its chief intent of protecting endangered species, while making enforcement and compliance simpler and will help protect America's instrument making industry. Towards this end we hope you will follow the suggestions put forward by NAMM –the trade association for the international music products industry. These can be found here: <http://www.namm.org/public-affairs/articles/namm-comments-aphis-needed-changes-lacey-declarati>

These concerns warrant your immediate attention as a struggling industry seeks to regain footing in our troubled economy; an industry that has helped America to define and express itself for over 150 years.

Sincerely,