

Lea Act of 1940

the Legislative Report of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry that accompanied the bill when it was reported out. The following is quoted from Secretary Wallace's communication:

The experience of the Department with this disease during the past 20 years has led to the inescapable conclusion that, if our future forests of white and sugar pine are to be maintained, a unified and coordinated control program must be systematically carried out on large areas of white pine forest lands, irrespective of ownership lines. At present this need is particularly acute in the mountainous areas of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast regions because (1) forest lands often consist of a mixture of Government, State, and private holdings intermingled within the same topographic units; (2) blister rust spreads from currant and gooseberry plants (*Ribes*) to the pines without regard to political or ownership boundaries so that these plants on one tract can result in the complete loss of the trees on lands in other ownerships or managed by other agencies; (3) no single owner whether public or private, by control operations solely on his own property, can protect himself against invasion of the disease; (4) shifts in interest and ownership of lands are inevitable because of the time interval required to grow a forest crop. These reasons, together with the need for protecting the forests of the future, and stabilizing the supplies of these valuable timber trees, necessitates the systematic application of control measures regardless of ownership.

The blister rust control program is one of great public importance and is of vital interest to the Federal Government not only from the fact that it is the largest single owner of white pine forest lands but also because the white pines, which are highly susceptible to attack, constitute a key resource and the basis on which a wide range of communities and commercial enterprises obtain their economic support. Everything possible should be done to insure perpetuation of these essential forest trees; and legislation which would authorize the carrying out of a unified control program, assuring the protection of this natural resource during periods of harvest and growth, would aid in the protection of vast interests of public concern as well as public property from preventable losses from a disease which recognizes no artificial boundaries.

This legislation is known as the Lea Act (Public Law No. 486-54, Stat. 168, 169) approved April 26, 1940. It applies only to white pine blister rust and reads as follows:

For forest protection against the white pine blister rust, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled, That to promote the stability of white pine forest-using industries, employment, and communities through the continuous supply of white and sugar pine timber, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized in cooperation with such agencies as he may deem necessary to use such funds as have been, or may hereafter be, made available for the purpose of controlling white pine blister rust, by preventing the spread to, and eliminating white pine blister rust from all forest lands, irrespective of the ownership thereof, when in the judgment of the Secretary of Agriculture the use of such funds on such lands is necessary in the control of the white pine blister rust: *Provided,* That in the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture no expenditures from funds provided under this authorization shall be made on private or State lands (except where such lands are intermingled with those which are federally owned and it is necessary in order to protect the property of the United States to work on those parts of the private or State-owned lands that immediately adjoin Federal lands) until a sum, or sums, at least equal to such expenditures shall have been appropriated, subscribed, or contributed by State, county, or local authorities, or by individuals or organizations concerned: *Provided further,* That no part of such appropriations shall be used to pay the cost of value of property injured or destroyed: *And provided further,* That any plan for the control and elimination of white pine blister rust on lands owned by the United States or retained under the restriction of the United States for Indian tribes, and for individual Indians, shall be subject to the approval of the Federal agency or Indian tribe having jurisdiction over such lands, and the Secretary of Agriculture may, in his discretion, and out of any moneys made available under this act, make allocations to said Federal agencies in such amounts as he may deem necessary for white pine blister rust control and elimination on lands so held or owned by the United States, the moneys so allotted to be expended by said agencies for the purposes specified.

(source: *History of white pine blister rust control: a personal account*, by Warren V. Benedict, United States Forest Service, Division of Forest Pest Control.

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