



**H.R. 2185 – To amend the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 to provide debt relief to developing countries that take action to protect forests and coral reefs and associated coastal marine ecosystems, to reauthorize such Act through fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes**

**FLOOR SITUATION**

H.R. 2185 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL) on May 7, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as amended, by unanimous consent, on July 31, 2007.

H.R. 2185 is expected to be considered by the House of Representatives on October 9, 2007.

**SUMMARY**

H.R. 2185 reauthorizes funding through fiscal years 2007 – 2010 for the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998, and expands the wilderness conservation incentive programs to now also include “coral reefs and associated coastal marine ecosystems.”

**BACKGROUND**

The Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 was designed to provide an incentive for foreign countries to preserve their tropical forests by reducing their debts owed to the United States in proportion to the amount of tropical forest they would protect and conserve. The program allows debt swaps, debt restructuring, and debt buybacks to generate funds for conservation programs. H.R. 2185 will expand the scope of the debt-for-nature swap programs to include coral reefs and ecosystems as well as tropical forests.

Since enactment of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act in 1998, eleven countries have participated in this program, establishing twelve bilateral agreements (Panama has two such agreements). In total, the existing programs have forgiven over \$20 million in debt that foreign nations owed to the United States and reportedly generated \$136.5 million in revenues for conservation programs in the participating countries. ([CRS: RL31286](#))

**COST**

A cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) was not available at the time of publication.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Congressional Research Service Report: RL31286 “[Debt-for-Nature Initiatives and the Tropical Forest Conservation Act: Status and Implementation.](#)” Updated September 11, 2007

**STAFF CONTACT**

For questions or further information contact Matt Lakin at (202) 226-2302.