

## **Jeffrey “Free” Luers Sentence Reduced to 10 Years**

February 28, 2008 (Eugene, OR) - This morning at 9:00am in Lane County Circuit Court the re-sentencing hearing for Jeffrey Luers took place in front of Judge Billings. This followed an Oregon court of appeals ruling in February 2007 that Luers original sentence of 22 years 8 months by Judge Lyle Velure was illegal, and the appeals court remanded the case back to Lane County Circuit Court for re-sentencing. Following the appeals court decision, negotiations have resulted in the decision today to reduce Luers sentence to 10 years, bringing his release date to late December 2009.

In June 2001, then 23 year-old Jeffrey "Free" Luers was arrested for the burning of three trucks at a Eugene car dealership. His stated purpose was to raise awareness about global warming and the role that SUVs and trucks play in that process. Despite the fact that this action hurt no one, caused only \$28,000 in damages and the cars were later resold, Luers received the draconian sentence imposed by Velure.

Luers gained support locally as well as all over the world as a political prisoner. It is widely believed that Luers received such a drastic sentence because of the political nature of the action he took. Following his original sentence, Amnesty International and the Eugene Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued letters of support citing that the sentence appeared to be politically motivated. During the course of his trial, statements were made by the police and prosecuting attorney that indicated it was Luers' political views on trial, not merely his actions. His defense successfully proved that evidence had been tampered with, officers had lied and that the prosecutor had manipulated evidence to get a legal search warrant at his residence. Luers was given a sentence that attempted to send the message to environmental and social justice activists that even a merely symbolic act of property destruction could be punished more harshly than many crimes against persons.

Prior to his imprisonment, Luers was a very well respected community activist in Eugene, Oregon involved with forest defense and cooking free food for the city's homeless population. He has remained active from prison, often writing news articles and monthly dispatches to his growing list of supporters. With a release date on the horizon, Luers future is bright and he plans to pursue courses and looks forward to sharing quality time with his family and loved ones.

### **Statement from Jeffrey Luers:**

“Today I feel a great weight lifted off of me, and my loved ones. While I believe my new sentence is still more of a reflection of my activism and my dissent than my actual crimes; I am looking forward to my much closer release date. I am proud of the many things I have accomplished while incarcerated, including reaching beyond oceans and borders to help raise awareness about global warming and to help combat social injustice.

I am thankful of my family, friends and the thousands of supporters and fellow activists from around the world who have stood by me since day one. And I'd especially like to thank my attorneys, and friends. Lauren Regan, Misha Dunlap and Shawn Wiley for never giving up on getting me out sooner than 22 years.

I am happy to say this journey is almost over and I'll be coming home soon.”

For more information, go to [www.cldc.org](http://www.cldc.org) and [www.freejeffluers.org](http://www.freejeffluers.org).