

## TRANSFER OF CERTAIN PUMICE STONE TO FREE LIST

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Mr. BYRD of Virginia, from the Committee on Finance, submitted the following

## R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 6368]

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 6368) to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to place certain pumice stone on the free list, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 6368 is to transfer from the dutiable list to the free list of the Tariff Act of 1930 pumice stone imported to be used in the manufacture of concrete masonry products, such as building blocks, bricks, tiles, and similar forms.

## GENERAL STATEMENT

Pumice stone, unmanufactured, is presently provided for in paragraph 206 of the Tariff Act of 1930, and is dutiable under two value classifications: that valued at \$15 or less per long ton, and that valued at more than \$15 per long ton. The pumice stone which will be covered by the bill is unmanufactured pumice valued at \$15 a ton or less and subject to a duty of 85 cents a ton. Such pumice stone could be entered free of duty only for use in the manufacture of the specified products. Any pumice stone entered for other uses would continue to be subject to duty.

Pumice stone is a highly porous or cellular variety of naturally occurring volcanic glass. One of its leading uses, after grading to size, is as a lightweight aggregate in monolithic concrete, concrete masonry units (including concrete building blocks, bricks, and tiles), and in

plasters. It is also used to a considerable extent as an admixture in portland cement for concrete having special properties.

U.S. production of these materials comes from about 15 States, all located west of the Mississippi River, particularly in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States.

In 1956, U.S. sales of domestically produced materials for use as lightweight aggregate, including admixture in cement, amounted to 746,000 short tons, valued at \$2.2 million (\$2.99 per short ton) or about 50 percent of the quantity and 47 percent of the value of pumiceous materials used for all purposes. In 1957, the latest year for which statistics are available, the sales of these materials for the same purposes amounted to 628,000 short tons, valued at \$1.9 million (\$3 per short ton), or 34 percent of the quantity and 41 percent of the value used for all purposes.

No official figures on the use pattern of pumice stone as a lightweight aggregate are available. It is estimated, however, that the manufacture of lightweight concrete building blocks consumes the major part of both domestically produced and imported pumiceous materials.

Imports of pumice stone valued at \$15 or less per long ton amounted to 38,434 short tons in 1958 with a value of \$271,201. Greece has been the most important source of imports of unmanufactured pumice stone valued at \$15 or less per long ton. In 1958 Greece accounted for about 82 percent of the total quantity and value of such imports. The U.S. Tariff Commission advised that during 1958, 85 percent of such imports entered the United States through customs ports in Florida. All, or nearly all, of the imports of pumice from Greece are used as a concrete aggregate, principally for the manufacture of lightweight concrete building blocks, and other concrete masonry blocks.

Favorable reports on this legislation were made by the Departments of State, Treasury, and Commerce and informative reports by the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Tariff Commission. The Department of Commerce advised that duty-free entry of pumice for the stated uses would benefit the makers of building blocks and other masonry products and the Department has no facts indicating that this would have an adverse effect on any U.S. industry.

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with subsection 4 of rule XXIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets; new matter is printed in italics; existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

### SECTION 201 OF THE TARIFF ACT OF 1930

#### TITLE II—FREE LIST

SEC. 201. That on and after the day following the passage of this Act, except as otherwise specially provided for in this Act, the articles mentioned in the following paragraphs, when imported into the United States or into any of its possessions (except the Virgin Islands,

American Samoa, Wake Island, Midway Islands, Kingman Reef, Johnston Island, and the island of Guam), shall be exempt from duty:

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*PAR. 1823. Pumice stone, when imported to be used in the manufacture of concrete masonry products, such as building blocks, bricks, tiles, and similar forms, under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury shall prescribe.*

