

# GIBSON GUITARS RAIDED FOR USING ILLEGALLY-SOURCED WOOD

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By **Neil** | Published: November 19, 2009

Federal agents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local police seized wood, guitars, computers and boxes of files from Gibson Guitar's Massman Road manufacturing facility yesterday.

Sources say the Nashville-based guitar manufacturer is being investigated for violating the Lacey Act, a key piece of environmental law, for importing endangered species of rosewood from Madagascar.



Rosewood is widely used in the construction of guitars and sells for \$5,000 per cubic meter, more than double the price of mahogany. The island nation off Africa's east coast is a key producer of the hardwood, the export of which has links to international criminal activity.

A statement from Gibson released late Tuesday afternoon says the company is "fully cooperating" with the investigation.

"Gibson Guitar is fully cooperating with agents of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service as it pertains to an issue with harvested wood. Gibson is a chain of custody certified buyer who purchases wood from legal suppliers who are to follow all standards."

"Gibson Guitar Chairman and CEO [Henry Juszkiewicz] sits on the board of the Rainforest Alliance and takes the issue of certification very seriously. The company will continue to cooperate fully and assist our federal government with all inquiries and information," the company's statement said.

Madagascar has struggled financially since a January coup and new President Andry Rajoelina issued an executive order in September legalizing the export of rosewood and ebony.

The move was decried by environmental groups and political leaders worldwide, as hardwood forests are key to Madagascar's unique ecology and serve as a habitat for a dwindling lemur population.

Via **Nashville Post**