

March 3, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed, Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

America's forestlands, nearly 60 percent of which are privately owned, are an essential part of our national green infrastructure. The nation's forest infrastructure, much like other critical infrastructure elements, provides numerous public benefits including clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. While we fully acknowledge the difficult decisions that come with addressing reductions to the Federal budget, we write today urging your continued support for programs that assist private forest owners with their efforts to conserve and sustain their land by providing:

- Technical assistance that helps land owners integrate the most sustainable management practices into their land management to ensure supplies of clean water and air, recreation, wildlife habitat and timber production.
- Assistance in combating pests and pathogens which are decimating forests both directly on their land and on adjacent public lands as well.
- Funds to help permanently preserve some of the most environmentally important and productive lands through conservation easements or outright public purchase.
- Solid, credible information about our forest resources to ensure sound decisions are made and threats are identified.

We know that some program funding levels will need to be reduced to meet budget targets and we know the Committee is working hard to make cuts that are proportionate and fair. As you consider where to cut spending over the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011, we urge your support for the following priority USDA Forest Service programs:

- Forest Stewardship Program
- Forest Health Program
- Forest Legacy as funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Forest Inventory and Analysis Program

The cost associated with many of these programs is shared with States and other non-Federal partners resulting in a significant return on the Federal investment. Supporting these programs will help address

some of the nation's most pressing needs such as job creation, renewable energy production, and producing products for everyday life. The undersigned urge your support and thank you for your consideration of our request.

Regards,

American Chestnut Foundation
American Forests
American Forest and Paper Association
American Forest Foundation
American Rivers
Appalachian Mountain Club
CarbonVerde, LLC
Conservation Forestry, LLC
Defenders of Wildlife
Environmental Defense Fund
Forest Resources Association, Inc.
Forest Guild
Fountains America
Framing Our Community
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of Gateway Communities
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest Resources Programs
National Network of Forest Practitioners
National Wildlife Foundation
National Woodland Owners Association
Pacific Forest Trust
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Siuslaw Institute
Society of American Foresters
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trust for Public Land
U.S. Endowment for Forestry & Communities, Inc.