

March 19, 2010

The Honorable James Moran
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Simpson:

The President's FY11 budget released on February 1st reflected some tough choices in the face of a freeze on domestic spending. Even in this tight budget climate, the undersigned organizations believe it is critically important to make solid investments in key federal programs that conserve and improve America's trees and forests on all-lands—rural and urban, public and private—in all states and U.S. territories. Doing so will spur job creation and move the nation toward a clean energy economy, and help reduce carbon emissions by as much as 20%.

Today, America's trees and forests support over 1 million jobs. Land stewardship and clean energy and climate mitigation strategies have the potential to generate thousands more new jobs as well as contribute to rural economic growth. Strong federal support for the two-thirds of America's forests in private ownership will increase the scale and pace of the forest stewardship work required to achieve the all-lands vision outlined by USDA Secretary Vilsack. Investments in the following U.S. Forest Service programs in FY2011 will help ensure that we fully realize the potential of family-owned forests to help the nation on its path towards a full economic recovery.

- **\$45 million for the Forest Stewardship Program:** The Forest Stewardship Program is administered in cooperation with state forestry agencies across the country and provides the largest advice and support mechanism for family woodland owners. The program provides information to private landowners to help them manage their land for wildlife, clean water, climate mitigation, timber production, and many other purposes. The Forest Stewardship Program plays a fundamental role in keeping forests as forests, preparing forest landowners for ecosystem services markets and other incentive programs, and maintaining jobs and diverse forest products markets in rural communities. Forest Stewardship Plans are increasingly serving as the gateway to participate in certification programs and accessing renewable energy and carbon markets.
- **\$66 million for the Cooperative Forest Health Program:** Through this program, the Forest Service and their state forest agency partners provide the detection, monitoring, and response mechanisms necessary to combat one of our biggest challenges—pests and pathogens. Well established forest pests cause the American public to lose billions of dollars in forest and tree benefits each year. This cost is expected to grow as new pests, such as the thousand canker disease attacking hardwood species in the Midwest, or the syrex woodwasp, which attacks pine

trees and has the potential to decimate much of the South's pine forests. Our recommended funding level will support jobs and help combat these and other devastating pests.

- **\$76 million for the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program:** The Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-85) mandated the USDA Forest Service to partner with the states and non-governmental interests to implement a nationally consistent, annual inventory program in all states, ensuring timely availability of data and developing state level reports every five years. A solid forest inventory system is essential to all our forest priorities—whether mitigating climate change, providing renewable energy feedstocks in the form of forest biomass, or determining the timber supply available to support a local mill and local jobs. Unfortunately, there are several states that have not been inventoried under the program, and many others that lack timely updates. We recommend the FIA program be funded at \$76 million to fully implement the FIA program nationally and add analytical capacity to focus on climate change monitoring and carbon accounting in forests.

America's trees and forests offer a wealth of solutions to meet many of our nation's current challenges – job creation, economic development, climate change mitigation and clean energy, among others. Investments in the U.S. Forest Service Forest Stewardship, Forest Health and Forest Inventory and Analysis programs will help ensure that we fully realize the potential of family-owned forests in helping the nation on its path to recovery from our current economic crisis.

Sincerely,

American Forests
American Forest Foundation
American Forest and Paper Association
Androscoggin River Watershed Council
Association of Consulting Foresters
BiNational Softwood Lumber Council
CarbonVerde
Environmental Defense Fund
Family Forest Foundation
Forest Resources Association
Fountains America
Kentucky Forest Industries Association
Louisiana Forestry Association
Maine Forest Service
Maryland Forests Association
Minnesota Forestry Association

National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Gateway Communities
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest Resource Programs
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Woodland Owners Association
New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association
Northern Forest Alliance
Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Society of American Foresters
Vermont Land Trust
Wildlife Mississippi
Woodlands Carbon Company

cc: The Honorable Colin Peterson
The Honorable Frank Lucas