

May 18, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: U.S. Forest Sector Opportunities in Climate and Energy Legislation**

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

We the undersigned forestry and conservation organizations are writing to encourage you, as you work on the Kerry-Lieberman climate and energy legislation, to ensure a strong role for the U.S. forest sector. The U.S. forest sector has immense potential to drive cost-effective carbon mitigation and adaptation, which will in turn create new economic opportunities for forest products companies, foresters, private landowners, and others across rural America.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Inventory, U.S. forests sequester 12% of annual U.S. carbon emissions. Analysis by EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture suggests that this capacity could be doubled through activities like reforestation, improved forest management, avoided conversion, and use of harvested wood products. These activities will create jobs in the U.S. forest sector—recent research by the University of Massachusetts found that sustainable forestry, forest restoration, and related activities generate 39.7 jobs for every \$1 million invested. This was the highest number for any economic sector studied, exceeding even renewable energy and transportation infrastructure.

Climate and energy legislation must include two key components to incentivize this job-creating activity: 1) Offset markets including robust opportunities for U.S. forests and harvested wood products; and 2) USDA supplemental incentives program for landowners who are unable to participate in offset markets. These two complementary approaches will provide an opportunity for private forest landowners of all sizes and the entire forest sector to develop carbon mitigation projects using a broad range of project types and strategies most appropriate to their goals.

The U.S. forest sector can also help address the challenges of climate adaptation. U.S. forests provide critical ecosystem services for our communities, from clean drinking water to fish and wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation. Forest stressors elevated by climate change, such as pests, invasive species, and fire, could compromise these services. In Nevada, according to a report of the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change, increasing drought due to higher temperatures and lower rainfall is expected to lead to larger beetle outbreaks and larger and more wildfires. Investments in forest adaptation will help increase the resilience of America's forests and create additional good jobs in the woods.

Climate and energy legislation offers a win-win opportunity for the U.S. forest sector—a chance to help address climate change mitigation and adaptation while creating jobs in the woods that will help strengthen economies across rural America. We strongly encourage you to give careful consideration to these important provisions in the climate and energy legislation.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy  
American Forest Foundation  
American Forest & Paper Association  
Binational Softwood Lumber Council  
Blue Source  
C2I  
Carbon Offset Providers Coalition  
CarbonVerde  
Conservation Forestry, LLC  
Empire State Forest Products Association  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Hardwood Federation  
Lyme Timber  
Maine Forest Service  
Maryland Forests Association  
National Alliance of Forest Owners  
National Association of University Forest Resource Programs  
National Association of State Foresters  
National Wildlife Federation  
New Forests  
New York State Forester's Office, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Plum Creek Timber Company  
Society of American Foresters  
Sustainable Forestry Initiative  
The Trust for Public Land  
Weyerhaeuser Company  
Wildlife Mississippi

Cc:

Senator Bingaman, Chairman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Senator Murkowski, Ranking member, Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee  
Senator Baucus, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
Senator Grassley, Ranking member, Senate Finance Committee  
Senator Lincoln, Chairman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
Senator Chambliss, Ranking member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee

Senator Stabenow, Chairman, Rural Revitalization, Conservation, Forestry, and Credit Subcommittee, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee  
Senator Cornyn, Ranking member, Rural Revitalization, Conservation, Forestry, and Credit Subcommittee, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee