

March 29, 2011

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

The undersigned organizations collectively believe in the importance of up-to-date inventory and analysis on forests in the United States. The USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program provides critical information that enables sound policy and forest management decisions. We fully recognize the difficult decisions that come with addressing reductions to the Federal budget and ***ask your support to fund FIA at no less than FY10 levels (i.e. \$72 million) to truly provide an accurate, up-to-date inventory of America's forests.***

The FIA Program is the nation's oldest forest census that has provided fundamental information about forests and has informed forest policies for over 75 years. The program collects data on everything from forest species composition, to forest growth rates, to forest health data. FIA data serves as the basis for determining trends in forest ownership, assessing wildlife habitat, wildfire, insect, and disease risks, predicting spread of invasive species, determining locations for forest products facilities, and for identifying and responding to priorities identified in the State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.

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. The funding reductions proposed in the President's FY12 Budget Request will disrupt the inventory cycle length and otherwise turn back the clock on FIA's information delivery. The President proposes these reductions at a time when the program is called on to also address contemporary issues such as estimating sustainable forest biomass supplies for domestic energy production, carbon sequestration rates and determining the timber supply available to support local mills and local jobs.

We urge Congress to support the FIA program in FY12 at no less than \$72 million to meet the original goals of the program and provide policy makers, forest managers, private investors, and others with the most up to date information to enable sound decisions regarding the nation's forests.

Regards,

Alabama Forestry Association  
American Forest Foundation  
American Forest and Paper Association

National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of State Foresters  
National Association of Forest Service Retirees

American Forest Resource Council  
American Forests  
Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council  
Association of Consulting Foresters  
CarbonVerde  
Conservation Forestry  
Engineered Wood Association  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Environmental and Energy Study Institute  
Forest Resources Association  
Game Creek Forest Restoration, LLC  
Hardwood Federation  
Hardwood Plywood and Veneer Association  
Kentucky Forest Industries Association  
Louisiana Forestry Association  
Lyme Timber Company  
Maine Audubon  
Maine Forest Products Council  
Maine Forest Service, Department of Conservation  
Montana Logging Association  
Missouri Forest Products Association  
National Alliance of Forest Owners  
National Association of University Forest  
Resources Programs  
National Network of Forest Practitioners  
National Wildlife Federation  
National Woodland Owners Association  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
New Forests  
Northeastern Loggers' Association  
Ohio Forestry Association  
Oregon Women in Timber  
Plum Creek  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Siuslaw Institute  
Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine  
Society of American Foresters  
Southern Forest Research Partnership  
Sustainable Forestry Initiative  
The Wilderness Society  
Virginia Forest Products Association  
Wisconsin Paper Council  
Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership