

Statement of the Forest Climate Working Group

For Immediate Release: February 13, 2009

Washington, D.C.—A new coalition representing virtually all sectors of the forest community—the forest products industry, conservation and wildlife groups, foresters, private forest owners, academics, and the carbon finance sector—today called upon Congress to include private working forests as a central part of federal climate change policy. The American Forest Foundation, along with The Trust for Public Land launched the diverse group a year ago. Drue DeBerry, Senior Vice President for Conservation for the American Forest Foundation said “There was unanimous agreement on the urgent need to step up forests’ capacity to remove carbon emissions from the atmosphere. It’s cost effective, it’s ready now, and it works.”

U.S. forests and forest products already capture and store 10 percent of all U.S. carbon emissions produced each year, but the new coalition called the Forest Climate Working Group says they can trap even more if landowner incentives and forest-carbon offsets are put in place. “This is something we can ramp up right now and that is exactly what policy makers want to see,” said Jad Daley, Director, Northern New England Programs for The Trust for Public Land. “We don’t need to wait for new technologies, and we have enough experience with carbon markets to make it work.” He added that conserving forests “buys us time we desperately need to make the long-term shift to a low-carbon economy.”

Industry supporters of FCWG range from some of the largest operators like Weyerhaeuser, MWV, and Plum Creek to trade groups like the American Forest & Paper Association, Bi-National Softwood Lumber Council, Hardwood Federation, and the National Hardwood Lumber Association. Industry and carbon finance groups like C2I, LLC, say that forests and forest products provide an important solution in helping to address climate change, and that they want to see this solution recognized in climate legislation.

Among the 30 members of FCWG are many of the nation’s largest and best-known conservation groups including the Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, Defenders of Wildlife, and The Wilderness Society. Robert Bonnie, Vice President/Land Conservation and Wildlife for the Environmental Defense Fund, cites a host of conservation benefits of this approach. “Private lands provide a majority of the habitat for most species on the U.S. endangered species list. Forests provide not just wildlife habitat, but important sources of fresh drinking water, flood control, clean air, and recreation for communities.”

Endorsing Organizations:

American Bird Conservancy
American Forest & Paper Association
American Forests
American Forest Foundation
Binational Softwood Lumber Council
C2I, LLC
California Forestry Association
Council of Western State Foresters
Defenders of Wildlife
Environmental Defense Fund
Forest Guild
Hardwood Federation
Maine Forest Service
Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences
MWV MeadWestvaco
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Foresters

National Association of University Forest
Resource Programs
National Hardwood Lumber Association
National Wildlife Federation
New Forests
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Plum Creek
Society of American Foresters
The Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Weyerhaeuser Company
Wildlife Mississippi

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