

The Honorable John Kerry  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsay Graham  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

December 9, 2009

Dear Senators Kerry, Lieberman, and Graham:

Our organizations commend your efforts to help shape bi-partisan climate legislation in the U.S. Senate. As you develop your legislative proposal, we encourage you to include provisions that will capture the immense potential for U.S. forests to help drive climate solutions. America's forest landowners and forest products industry can help drive land-based carbon reductions in a manner that is cost-effective and will create new economic opportunities in the forest sector and other environmental benefits for society.

We write today to offer our perspectives on three climate policy issues of particular importance to U.S. forests: carbon offset markets, supplemental incentives for domestic reductions outside of offset markets, and forest adaptation. America's forests and forest products sequester and store a remarkable 10% of our country's annual carbon emissions—capacity the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates we could double to 20% with appropriate offset credits and other incentives for carbon-specific management and conservation. We urge you to ensure that climate legislation creates robust carbon offset credits and other incentives for the U.S. forest sector and structures them appropriately to deliver environmental integrity and economic viability. This includes offset credits and other incentives for improved forest management with appropriate crediting for harvested wood products.

The recent interagency report, *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*, helped remind us that climate change will also exacerbate pests, drought, and other forest stressors. Any natural resources adaptation response must have forest-specific components that enable federal and state agencies and private landowners to manage these threats. Addressing forest adaptation will maintain our forests' carbon sequestration capacity and the flow of ecosystem services—from clean water and wildlife to forest products—so critical to our economy and security.

We hope you will keep the above recommendations in mind as you continue to shape your legislative proposal. We look forward to working with you in the future to ensure that America's forests can help address climate change while strengthening the economy of rural America.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy  
American Forest & Paper Association  
American Forest Foundation

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies  
Binational Softwood Lumber Council  
California Forestry Association  
Carbon Verde  
Conservation Forestry, LLC  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Forest Guild  
Hardwood Federation  
Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
Maine Forest Service  
National Alliance of Forest Owners  
National Association of State Foresters  
National Association of University Forest Resource Programs  
National Wildlife Federation  
New Forests  
Pinchot Institute for Conservation  
Plum Creek  
Society of American Foresters  
The Lyme Timber Company  
Trust for Public Land  
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
Weyerhaeuser Company