

January 21, 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks, Chairman
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Chairman Dicks:

We, the undersigned organizations wish to express our appreciation for your leadership in restoring forest sector jobs and improving the nation's forests with investments in USDA Forest Service programs in the House Appropriations Committee's economic stimulus package.

Federal investment of \$550 million in existing USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs can put 10,000 people to work reducing the threat of wildfire on high priority acres around communities, restoring forest ecosystems on non-federal lands, improving the health of urban and community forests, and developing clean renewable wood-energy systems in rural forest-based communities.

Investing \$300 million can employ 5,400 rural Americans to help address the nation's backlog in hazardous fuels and forest health treatments on federal lands. These funds will be used to treat millions of acres of National Environmental Policy Act approved fuels reduction projects while protecting rural communities from the devastating impacts of wildfire.

Additionally, investing \$650 million in capital improvements and maintenance on US Forest Service lands will help improve roads and trails, addressing water quality and safety issues posed by the current maintenance backlog. This has the potential to put over 10,000 people to work.

Again, we greatly appreciate your support for improving the nation's public and private forests through federal investment in USDA Forest Service programs.

Sincerely,

American Forest Foundation
American Forest Resource Council
Association of Consulting Foresters
Black Hills Forest Resource Association
Colorado Timber Industry Association
Council of Western State Foresters
Hardwood Federation

Idaho Conservation League
Intermountain Forest Association
Mississippi River Trust
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Counties
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Woodland Owners Association
Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters
Ruffed Grouse Society
Society of American Foresters
Southern Group of State Foresters
The Pacific Forest Trust
Washington Forest Protection Association