



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 540, Washington, DC 20001

June 25, 2008

The Honorable David Obey, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

**2008
Executive
Committee**

The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking
Member
House Appropriations Committee
2112 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) was pleased to see that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies took important measures to restore reductions in funding contained in the President's budget proposal for fiscal year 2009. NASF particularly appreciates attention to those forestry related programs as recently authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. As part of a coalition to advance interagency and private sector collaboration in the interest of the nation's forest resources, NASF encourages Congress to adequately fund those Department of Agriculture programs that provide services and assistance to non-industrial private forest landowners.

An adequate conservation operations account is essential to ensure the staff support and expertise necessary to deliver technical assistance and guidance to producers and landowners. The increased emphasis on inter-agency capability between the Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service as emphasized in the Farm Bill is critical to that effort. NASF appreciates and encourages support for the Subcommittee recommendation of \$847.9 million for conservation operations.

The Farm Bill amplified the availability and application of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for forest practices. NASF is optimistic that EQIP will become an increasingly important source of assistance to forest landowners, and in that regard we are encouraged to see that the Subcommittee proposes to increase EQIP funding to \$1.1 billion. However, considering the expanded importance of the program for forestry, we would respectfully request that the Committee further increase the appropriation by \$270 million to achieve the authorized level contained in the Farm Bill.

The McIntire-Stennis grant fund is a critical source of assistance to land grant universities for cooperative forestry research programs. NASF appreciates and supports the Subcommittee proposal to increase the 2008 appropriation by 4.9 percent to \$26 million.

The increased occurrence and expansion of invasive plants, insects, and disease is a serious concern for state forestry agencies in their efforts to maintain the health and sustainability of forest ecosystems. In many cases impacts to forest biology as well as economic loss are extraordinary. Increased funding is, therefore, necessary to support effective implementation of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service programs. Specifically, NASF respectfully

requests expanded funding for control of emerald ash borer (\$45 million), Asian longhorned beetle (\$30 million), sudden oak death (\$10 million), and Sirex woodwasp (\$5 million).

The National Association of State Foresters sincerely appreciates the continued attention and support of the House Appropriations Committee for those programs that promote the protection, conservation, and long term sustainability of the nation's forest lands. We look forward to working with your Committee in these shared responsibilities and initiatives in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk Rowdabaugh".

Kirk Rowdabaugh, President
National Association of State Foresters