



October 5, 2009

The Honorable Norm Dicks  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Diane Feinstein  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

Dear Chairmen Dicks and Feinstein and Ranking Members Simpson and Alexander,

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) greatly appreciates your continued support of our nation's forests and forest landowners. NASF is a non-profit organization comprised of the directors of all of the nation's state and territorial forest management agencies. Our members have a public trust responsibility for managing and protecting two-thirds of the nation's forestland, which is held in private or non-federal public ownership.

As you undergo conference on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations Bill, NASF urges you to support the following:

**FLAME Fund for Emergency Wildfire Suppression Activities** (Sec. 431 of the Senate engrossed bill): Section 431 establishes the FLAME Fund (the fund) specifically for suppression of catastrophic emergency wildland fires, which will move the nation towards a more sustainable suppression funding mechanism. The fund will provide a more stable funding source and will reduce the need to borrow from non-fire accounts within the Forest Service—including those designed to improve forest health and reduce hazardous fuels—to pay for suppressing large, emergency wildfires. Additionally, the fund will:

- Institute clear guidelines regarding the conditions for which emergency funds can be accessed;
- Establish specific accounting requirements regarding how FLAME funds can be spent; and
- Require agencies to budget for emergency and non-emergency fire in future years.

**Executive Director**  
Jay Farrell

**2010 Executive Committee**

*President* Steven W. Koehn, Maryland  
*Vice President* Jeff Jahnke, Colorado  
*Treasurer* John Shannon, Arkansas  
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Jim Barresi, New Jersey  
Arthur "Butch" Blazer, New Mexico  
Carl E. Garrison III, Virginia

**Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund:** This provision provides dedicated funding to implement the Forest Landscape Restoration Program included in the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009. The large landscape-scale restoration projects outlined in this program represent the holistic approach necessary to achieving our collective goal of healthier natural resources that provide a wide array of environmental, economic, and social benefits.

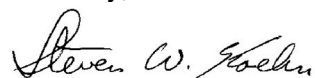
**Forest Inventory and Analysis Funding:** NASF encourages you to adopt the \$72 million (\$67 million in Research and \$5 million through State & Private Forestry) funding level for FIA included in the Senate bill. This level of funding will enable the US Forest Service and partners to move closer to the goal of national implementation. The program provides unbiased information which serves as the basis for monitoring trends in wildlife habitat, wildfire risk, insect and disease threats, predicting spread of invasive species and for solving many other resource questions. It is particularly important tool used to inform the State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies required by the 2008 Farm Bill.

**Forest Legacy and Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Programs:** NASF urges you to follow the Forest Legacy national project rankings submitted with the US Forest Service FY 2010 President's Budget. We recognize that all projects may not be funded under the current budget environment, but respectfully ask you to consider the established project selection criteria developed by the US Forest Service. In addition, we urge you to include \$1 million to initiate implementation of the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program as contained in the Senate bill and included in the President's Budget request. Helping communities and tribes to purchase forests threatened by conversion and carefully manage these lands for the future can greatly aid integrated resource management across the landscape while creating lasting economic and societal benefits in home communities.

Lastly, NASF asks that you reject the **Prohibition on use of Wildland Fire Management Stimulus Funds in the District of Columbia** (Sec. 424 of the Senate engrossed bill). The intent of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was chiefly to provide employment opportunities for all Americans. ARRA authorized activities on State and private lands, including ecosystem improvement, through *all authorities* available to the US Forest Service. The ARRA projects selected by the US Forest Service for the District of Columbia will employ approximately 90 citizens in jobs that will restore Washington's urban forest ecosystem. The projects are a fitting example of the Secretary of Agriculture's "all-lands" approach to forest conservation and management.

Through the actions outlined above, you will provide greater security to the funding for wildland fire suppression and invest in cost-effective solutions to meeting national needs for renewable forest products, energy, and environmental services. Please contact Scott Fenimore at (304) 276-1486 or Jake Donnay (202) 624-5977 in the event you have questions. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Steven W. Koehn  
President

Cc: Members of the Conference Committee  
Members of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee