

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

Investments in forestry research are essential for the future health and sustainability of the nation's forests. The undersigned organizations urge Congress to reverse the trend of decreasing investments in USDA Forest Service Research and Development (R&D) by providing a **\$303 million dollar funding level in FY 2017 with \$220 million directed to Forest and Rangeland Research program areas.**

Researchers work in a range of biological, physical, and social science fields to promote sustainable management of the diverse forests and rangelands nationwide and the innovative use of the products they provide. R&D programs conducted at research stations, the International Institute for Tropical Forestry and the Forest Products Laboratory are undeniably important functioning as an incubator for new products and ideas, exploring forest ecosystem disturbance response, forest resilience, and quantifies the contributions of forests to air and water quality, and drives innovation in renewable energy development. Notable recent R&D research contributions include:

#### **Using Science to Guide Drought Management Response**

A national assessment report on the impacts of drought on U.S. forests and rangelands establishes the scientific foundation needed to manage for drought resiliency and adaptation. This assessment report includes management options to help federal, state, and private organizations implement strategies to sustain healthy, resilient ecosystems that continue to produce vital goods and services, such as pulp and wood products.

#### **Identifying a Promising White-Nose Syndrome Treatment**

Using native soil bacteria to inhibit growth of the White-nose Syndrome causing fungus, Forest Service researchers developed a treatment that resulted in previously sick bats being re-released to their native habitat. This collaborative research effort involving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Kentucky Department of Conservation, and other important partners benefits forest managers, owners, forest dependent industries; farmers; and the public.

#### **Helping Cities Assign Value to Urban Tree Canopies**

The publication of Community Tree Guides helps managers calculate the value of new tree plantings in terms of future energy savings, carbon sequestration, air pollutant uptake, storm water runoff reduction, and property value increases. Credible information about the benefits of well-managed urban forests is important as cities work to protect and restore environmental quality and enhance economic opportunity.

## **Improving Smoke Management Capabilities**

The Blue Sky Smoke Management Model predicts in real time where and when smoke from wildland fires will go. In 2015, the model and this research was used by fire management agencies to alert affected communities and reduce human health effects.

Advancing forest science is integral to improve the health of US forests, the competitiveness of US products in the global marketplace, and to address current and future challenges. Continuing the trend of reductions in the R&D budget will result in significant gaps in the knowledge base necessary to address the many threats facing our nation's forest and competitive losses in the global economy. ***Therefore, our organizations support a funding level of \$303 million for USFS R&D with particular emphasis on prioritization of research projects uniquely suited to R&D expertise and furthering agency and partner objectives.***

Sincerely,

American Forests

Forest Stewards Guild

National Association of Conservation Districts

National Association of State Foresters

National Association of University Forest Resource Programs

National Wild Turkey Federation

National Woodlands Owners Association

Pinchot Institute for Conservation

Society for Range Management

Society of American Foresters

The Nature Conservancy