

April 17, 2018

The Honorable Michael Conaway, Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson, Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson,

The undersigned organizations representing millions of forest owners, conservationists, hunters, anglers, forest product manufacturers, and natural resource professionals participating in the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition (FIFB), wish to thank you for incorporating a number of the Coalition's private forest policy recommendations in the introduced House 2018 Farm Bill. We look forward to working with the Committee towards passage of a bill, as we believe it is an important step forward and includes private forest provisions that are essential to healthy, thriving private forestland, forest owners, and the forest-based economy.

While members of both parties are dedicated to building a well-intentioned bill, we recognize that the Committee has struggled this year to achieve bipartisan agreement on some issues. Historically, the Farm Bill has been a hallmark of bipartisan cooperation, and the Coalition is committed to working with the Committee to pass another bill with bipartisan solutions that will enable final passage of a Farm Bill.

As a key component of our nation's agricultural economy and environment, America's private forests—covering nearly two-thirds of America's forests and owned by private owners, families, and individuals—provide Americans with clean air and water, places to hike, hunt, and fish, habitat for fish and wildlife, and thousands of forest products we use every day. Private forests support over 2.4 million rural jobs and provide over half of our nation's wood supply. Unfortunately, these forests are facing increasing threats from insects, disease, wildfire, development pressures, and rapidly shifting markets for forest products. If not addressed, these issues put forests and the many benefits that Americans rely on from them at risk.

The Committee's draft Farm Bill includes many important policies and funding for key programs that will help tackle these challenges and improve stewardship of private and family-owned forests.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the 2018 Farm Bill's private forest provisions and funding authorizations in the coming months to be sure private forests can remain healthy and to help our industry continue to secure new and expanded market opportunities for forest products.

Thank you again for your dedication to the 2018 Farm Bill and for including strong provisions for private forests recommended by our Coalition. The Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition is ready to assist you to ensure that the nation's private forest owners and the forest-dependent communities and industries they empower, have assurance that the tools that help keep private forests healthy and sustainable, will continue into the future.

Sincerely,

Aldo Leopold Foundation

American Bird Conservancy

American Chestnut Foundation

American Forest Foundation

American Woodcock Society

American Wood Council
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Biomass Thermal Energy Council
CarbonVerde, LLC
Center for Heirs' Property Preservation
Empire State Forest Products Association
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Forestry Association of South Carolina
Forest Resources Association
Green Forests Work
Hancock Natural Resource Group
Hardwood Federation
Jory Resources Inc
Land Trust Alliance
Louisiana Pacific
Lyme Timber Company
Michigan Forest Association
Minnesota Forestry Association
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest Resources Programs
National Audubon Society
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Wildlife Federation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wooden Pallet & Container Association
National Woodland Owners Association
New England Forestry Foundation
Northern Forest Center
Ohio Forestry Association, Inc.

Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Rayonier, Inc.
Resource Management Service, LLC
Ruffed Grouse Society
Sazerac Company
Society of American Foresters
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc.
Texas Forestry Association
The Conservation Fund
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trees Forever
Vermont Woodlands Association
Virginia Forestry Association
Washington Farm Forestry Association
Washington Forest Protection Association
Weyerhaeuser Company
Wildlife Mississippi