

October 20, 2022

Randy Moore
Chief, USDA Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Moore,

The undersigned organizations write you today with regards to the \$160 million included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provided to the Forest Service for implementing restoration projects pursuant to good neighbor agreements covered under the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA).

We recognize the agency's efforts to date to engage states and partners on decisions and appreciate your continued engagement, and are using this opportunity to illustrate how we can be helpful and raise GNA as an immediate opportunity. Our organizations are interested in discussing and helping your agency develop an implementation plan for this critical funding. We are also interested in ensuring consistent and inclusive representation to facilitate meaningful dialogue across the country. We urge you to invite us and other partners into further discussion and consultation on making Good Neighbor Authority successful. As the agency navigates the complexities of releasing BIL funding, we encourage the agency to continue leveraging the breadth of our networks to drive consistent representation including of state foresters and partners on the ground to aid the Forest Service's GNA investment of across each Region.

Our organizations represent essential partnerships in realizing GNA accomplishments to date. We have supported GNA since its beginning as a pilot authority, through its permanent expansion in the 2014 Farm Bill, and successfully advocated for amendments in the 2018 Omnibus and 2018 Farm Bill which further expanded GNA as a restoration tool. As you understand and appreciate, successful implementation of this funding will require coordinating with and leveraging the resources and expertise of state forestry agencies and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to maximize the impact of BIL GNA investments. It is critical this GNA funding be additive to the current body of GNA work and not substitutionary.

To date, GNA has been utilized by state forestry agencies, tribes, counties and the Forest Service, in partnership with local industry and NGOs to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, support local communities and their economies, address insect and disease infested trees, increase watershed health, and more. We urge you to prioritize and require your staff to engage in consistent and meaningful collaboration, including joint planning and project prioritization, with state, local,

or Tribal governments, and NGOs to improve the process for allocating BIL GNA funding in FY23 and beyond.

We appreciate the example set by Deputy Chief of the National Forest System, Chris French who met with a subset of our signatories in July to discuss how to best utilize the GNA BIL funding, and we look forward to building on that discussion.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to continuing our partnership to improve forest conditions and responding to the wildfire crisis.

Sincerely,

Federal Forest Resource Coalition
National Association of State Foresters
National Wild Turkey Federation
The Nature Conservancy