

September 09, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Scott  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Charles Schumer

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Chairman Scott:

Thank you for your collective work to craft the Agriculture Committees' forest restoration and wildfire resilience titles of the Build Back Better package that Congress will soon consider. We write in support of the forestry investments in the package and look forward to working with you to see them enacted.

As you know, fire is a normal attribute of many healthy forests. Yet, uncharacteristic wildfire is transforming our nation's forests and woodlands at an unprecedented rate, resulting in negative consequences for community safety, public health, watershed protection, carbon storage, wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Your forestry investments will address this need by accelerating science-based forest and habitat restoration projects, including prescribed fire. Importantly, this funding would go towards areas in need of assistance while conserving critical forest ecosystems and habitat. These resources will also ensure that the Forest Service has the capacity to effectively integrate wildlife habitat restoration with forest resiliency, wildfire risk reduction, and community protection efforts. Moreover, your forestry investments will provide funding for the restoration of carbon and biodiversity rich old forests and for the Legacy Roads and Trails program, which focuses resources on improving wildlife habitat and water quality. The proposed investment in the Forest Legacy Program will also protect forests that sequester carbon and preserve drinking water supplies across the country.

Similarly, your bill provides critical funding for infrastructure workforce needs through collaborative forest landscape restoration, which prioritizes integrated forest, watershed and wildlife habitat restoration at the landscape level and has a proven track record of success. Investment in the Civilian Climate Corps will likewise support restoration workforce development and maximize efforts to engage a new and diverse generation of climate-focused conservation work. Finally, your bill's funding for the Urban and Community Forestry program is a critical investment in programs that address the harmful effects of a warming climate on human health.

In various capacities, we have called on Congress to provide tens of billions of additional dollars over the next decade to restore our forests and make them more resilient to wildfire and mitigate the impact of climate change from rural and urban communities. Your package makes these investments and will allow the Forest Service and its non-Federal partners to accelerate the

watershed and habitat restoration, research and development, and climate mitigation work that is long overdue. Thank you for your efforts, and we are pleased to support your proposal.

Sincerely,

American Forests  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
Forest Stewards Guild  
League of Conservation Voters  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition  
Sierra Club  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Sustainable Northwest  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wilderness Society  
Western Environmental Law Center