

November 26, 2012

The Honorable John Boehner
United States House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
United States House of Representatives
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
United States House of Representatives
H-329 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leaders Cantor and Pelosi:

On behalf of the millions of forest owners, conservationists, hunters, anglers, forest product manufacturers, and natural resource professionals represented in the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition, we are writing to urge you to pass comprehensive five-year Farm Bill legislation.

We know there are many important issues facing our federal government, and we are aware that there are policy matters in Farm Bill titles still seeking consensus. But we strongly believe that passing a Farm Bill will address some of the most pressing issues we face as a nation, including job growth and economic recovery in rural America. Additionally, passing comprehensive Farm Bill legislation is fiscally responsible and represents good governance, a strategic reform that will save our country billions of dollars.

The nation's forests and the associated forest industry employ over 900,000 people in family-wage jobs and generate more the \$175 billion in products every year. But with the current economic climate, the industry has lost over 320,000 jobs since 2005. The forests that support these jobs are facing increasing threats from insects, disease, wildfire, development pressures, and loss of markets for forest products. If forest priorities are addressed in the Farm Bill, the bill will help keep private forests healthy and intact while securing new and expanded market opportunities for forest products. This in turn, will help sustain America's forests and the associated jobs industries that rely on forests.

We understand the difficult fiscal climate that Congress is dealing with but we urge Congress to avoid further cuts to the Farm Bill's baseline, beyond those included in the House and Senate bills. While the cuts to conservation, forestry, and energy programs in both the House and Senate bills will have an impact on forests, we believe America's rural communities and our nation's forest resources need the certainty provided by five-year Farm Bill reform.

Farm Bill conservation, forestry, and energy programs give forestland owners the tools they need to manage healthy and sustainable forests, keep their forests as forests amidst growing threats and challenges, and successfully market their sustainable forest products. We urge you to ensure the Coalition's priorities are addressed in the Farm Bill including:

- Strong provisions for forests in Conservation Programs;
- Strengthened forestry outreach, education, research, and inventory programs;
- Tools to combat forest-related invasive species; and
- Improved forest market opportunities, including ensuring all forest products are included in the USDA Biobased Markets Program

We urge you to pass a comprehensive, five- year Farm Bill, to ensure that the nation’s private forest owners and the forest-dependent communities and industries have assurance that the tools that help keep private forests healthy and sustainable, will continue into the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Forests
American Forest Foundation
American Forest & Paper Association
American Wood Council
Appalachian Mountain Club
Arkansas Forestry Association
Biomass Thermal Energy Council
Black Hills Forest Resource Association
California Redwood Company
CarbonVerde
Colorado Timber Industry Association
Connecticut Forest & Park Association
Dovetail Partners, Inc.
Environmental Defense Fund
Federal Forest Resource Coalition
Florida Forestry Association
Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri
Forest Landowners Association
Forest Resources Association
Georgia Forestry Association
Green Diamond
Hardwood Federation
Idaho Forest Owners Association
Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association
Intermountain Forest Association
Kentucky Forest Industries Association
Land Trust Alliance
Louisiana Forestry Association
Michigan Forest Association

Minnesota Forest Industries
Minnesota Timber Producers Association
Mississippi Forestry Association
Montana Forest Owners Association
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest Resources Programs
National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
National Woodland Owners Association
New England Forestry Foundation
New England Wood Pellet, LLC
New York Forest Owners Association
North Carolina Forestry Association
Northern Forest Center
Ohio Forestry Association
Oklahoma Woodland Owners' Association
Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Pacific Forest Trust
Plum Creek Timber Company
Quail Unlimited
Ruffed Grouse Society
Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine
Society of American Foresters
South Carolina Forestry Association
Southern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Sustainable Northwest
Tennessee Forestry Association
Texas Forestry Association
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Lands
Vermont Woodlands Association
Virginia Forestry Association
Washington Farm Forestry Association
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Weyerhaeuser
Wildlife Mississippi
Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association