



United States Senate

September 7, 2021

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

Dear Chair Stabenow,

As the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry drafts its component of the infrastructure reconciliation bill, I urge you to consider investments in programs that will reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, mitigate the growing threats from climate change, and ensure protections for natural resources that are increasingly at risk from drought and higher temperatures.

Specifically, I would ask that not less than \$50 billion be provided for the Forest Service for work related to wildfire risk reduction, forest health, and climate mitigation and adaptation. This funding should include investments in programs like the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, hazardous fuels reduction projects, wildfire defense grants for high-risk communities, watershed protection and health, vegetation management, post-fire restoration, and the road and maintenance backlog.

It is critical that substantial funding also be provided for constructing wood processing facilities to make use of the small-diameter timber coming off forests from fuel reduction projects. This funding could be provided either through the Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Grant Program, or through the Wood Innovation Grant Program with language indicating that it could be used to construct new facilities. I also encourage you to include resources to protect old growth forests and at-risk species on national forest lands. Along with robust funding for restoration and hazardous fuel reduction, these conservation investments will help our forests remain resilient in the face of a warming climate.

Thank you for your continuing work to advance this critical piece of legislation. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can be of any assistance as we work to pass this bill in the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/jp

PRESS RELEASES

"Historic Investment": Bennet Applauds \$40 Billion Investment in America's Forests in House Ag Committee Budget Bill

September 09, 2021

Major Provisions Modeled After Bennet's Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act

House Agriculture Committee Proposal Also Includes Significant Funding to Support Clean Energy and Economic Development in Rural Communities

Denver -- Today, Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet, chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry's Subcommittee on Conservation, Climate, Forestry, and Natural Resources, released the statement below following the release of the House Agriculture Committee's portion of the Build Back Better budget, which includes a historic \$40 billion investment over the next decade in America's forests:

"Our forests and watersheds are at the heart of our economy and way of life in the West, but for far too long, Washington has failed to invest in them. I'm heartened to see that the Agriculture Committee has included tens of billions of dollars for forest restoration and wildfire resilience, trail maintenance, conservation, and habitat restoration, mirroring my Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act.

"This historic investment will create good-paying jobs across the Mountain West, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, and safeguard our communities and our water supplies. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to get this important investment across the finish line."

Since introducing the Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act earlier this year, Bennet has visited with local leaders across Colorado calling for a \$40-60 billion investment in America's forests through the Build Back Better budget.

The House Agriculture Committee's proposal provides a \$40 billion investment in America's federal, non-federal, urban, and community forests in partnership with states, local governments, tribes, and landowners. Consistent with the Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act, it includes tens of billions of dollars to support locally-led forest and watershed restoration, wildfire mitigation, hazardous fuels, and vegetation management projects, along with funding to enhance outdoor access and restore wildlife habitat. It also provides \$4.5 billion to establish a Civilian Climate Corps to support this restoration, resilience, and conservation work.

[Conservation](#)[Economy & Jobs](#)

Permalink: <https://www.bennet.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2021/9/historic-investment-bennet-applauds-40-billion-investment-in-america-s-forests-in-house-ag-committee-budget-bill>



September 30, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

As western governors, we write to express our strong support for the inclusion of important forestry, natural and working lands focused investments in the developing budget reconciliation package. As western states, where federally owned and managed lands make up significant portions, if not the majority, of lands in our states; these resources represent a vast and critical natural infrastructure. This natural infrastructure not only forms a key cornerstone in our ability to adapt to the climate crisis, but is also particularly vulnerable to its effects. Whether extreme drought, record setting wildfire seasons and oppressive wildfire smoke, more intense storms and corresponding flash-floods or landslides, or the broader impacts of climate change on wildlife and ecosystems, our states and our landscapes are on the front lines of the climate crisis, and the federal package must account for this fact.

A number of key proposed investments will help our lands, communities and states prepare for, and ideally avoid, the frequency and severity of future disastrous climate impacts that our states have faced in recent years. Specifically we would draw your attention to and call upon you to support those items currently included in the House Agriculture Committee mark, and proposed by the Senate Agriculture Committee relating to forestry, climate smart agriculture, research and clean energy. These investments include over \$50 billion to address critical elements of addressing and responding to the climate crisis for sectors foundational to the West. These investments will also serve to reduce over an estimated billion tons of carbon pollution, supporting the administration's greenhouse gas goals, all while supporting farmers, ranchers and landowners facing head-on the challenges brought upon them by our changing climate.

Our natural and working lands are a key component of a comprehensive approach to the climate crisis. The House Agriculture Committee Mark and Senate Agriculture Committee proposal contains vital investments totaling roughly \$40 billion particularly focused on landscape restoration and wildfire mitigation for both private and public forests. The west-wide wildfire impacts of the last several years underscore the urgent and critical nature of investing in our national forest system, as well as federal owned and managed rangelands, grasslands, and other multipurpose public lands located throughout the West. With response and recovery burdens all too frequently bestowed upon the states. These proposals include \$20 billion in targeted Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) investments, including fuels reduction, forest restoration and conservation on national forest lands, critical and targeted investments that will yield measurable benefits. Critical prevention, restoration and adaptation work is being done on non-federal lands and the proposed investment of roughly \$15 billion in grants to states, tribes and private landowners will ensure this critical work isn't undermined by the frequent checkerboard of land ownership we see in the West. With significant growth pressures in the WUI, conservation is a critical tool in helping states and localities ensure smart-growth and avoid the expansion of dangerous living conditions, the proposed \$4.5 billion in grants for programs like the Forest Legacy program and other conservation ends is vital funding for western states and communities. Finally, the improved research abilities enabled by the proposed \$500 million investment, will enable land management agencies, local communities and states to better plan, better understand and better invest in and better adapt to the needs of a climate-changed West. Smart, targeted investments today in science-based land management efforts will help avoid exponentially greater costs in the future.

As western governors, we have seen firsthand the devastation that comes with climate change, and these impacts have captured national headlines throughout the unprecedented and now never-ending wildfire seasons, through intense droughts, flash floods, mudslides and myriad of other impacts endured by our communities and citizens. The investments contained in the proposed reconciliation packages aimed at our western states, communities and especially landscapes and ecosystems will have direct benefits in alleviating those attention grabbing disasters. As leaders of states where every dollar matters, we understand the pressures associated with trimming public expenditures and detailed fiscal responsibility. Yet these disasters and the impacts of climate change will only increase as our climate warms, and for the sake of our states, communities, lands and budgets; in this case an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

We urge you to support these valuable investments without delay, as waiting any longer would only result in increasing and more expensive needs in the near future.

Sincerely,



Governor Jared Polis
State of Colorado



Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California



Governor Steve Sisolak
State of Nevada



Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
State of New Mexico



Governor Kate Brown
State of Oregon

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Majority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture
The Honorable Rep. David Scott, Chair, House Agriculture Committee
Members of the California Congressional Delegation
Members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation
Members of the Nevada Congressional Delegation
Members of the New Mexico Congressional Delegation
Members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation
Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 15, 2021

Gina McCarthy
National Climate Advisor
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

We write today as Members of the Congressional Black Caucus's Task Force on Transportation, Infrastructure, Environment, and Energy to request that you work with us to ensure that the critical environmental justice related funding currently included in the House's Build Back Better Act does not get cut as the bill moves forward. It is imperative that we make investments in environmental justice related programs to help mitigate the impacts of environmental racism and environmental inequity on our communities and ensure that they are not left behind as we build a sustainable economy.

The decades-old legacy of racism and environmental inequity has made environmental justice communities – including low-income communities, communities of color, and Tribal and indigenous communities in the U.S. and U.S. territories – particularly vulnerable. Members of these communities are more likely to reside in areas with higher levels of pollution or live on the 'fenceline' of industry and transportation corridors. These communities have historically borne the brunt of pollution in our nation and continue to endure inadequate access to safe drinking water, face the ill effects of air pollution, both indoors and outdoors, and bear other impacts of disproportionately high pollution levels. These injustices have been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We applaud the Administration for including robust investments to help remedy these longstanding injustices in the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan. As we consider historic investments using budget reconciliation, we must preserve those investments which are already included in the House's Build Back Better Act and are critical for environmental justice communities, including those for superfund remediation (\$10 billion), lead pipe replacement (\$30 billion), combined sewer overflows (\$2 billion), purchase of electric school buses (\$5 billion), lead paint remediation (\$10 billion), tribal homes (\$500 million), urban tree planting (\$3 billion), equitable outdoor access and climate-smart forestry investments for underserved communities (\$600 million), Environmental Justice Block Grants (\$5 billion), the National Environmental Policy Act (\$100 million for the Forest Service, \$200 million for the Department of Energy, \$100 million for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, \$150 million for the Department of Interior, and additional NEPA funds for the Department of

Transportation and Army Corps of Engineers), individual household decentralized wastewater grants (\$450 million) and USDA rural water programs (\$430 million), Healthy Ports (\$3.5 billion), to address and monitor air pollution, including in schools (\$370 million), Community Development Block Grants (\$8.5 billion), the Housing Investment Fund (\$10 billion), and Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants (\$3.95 billion).

All Americans should have the right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment, regardless of their zip code or socioeconomic status. We applaud the Administration's action to ensure that these rights are upheld through the Justice40 Initiative and a whole-of-government approach to environmental justice, but we must ensure that we prioritize environmental justice communities and do not allow any of this funding to be cut from the Build Back Better Act.

We look forward to speaking with you as soon as possible to discuss these crucial investments.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



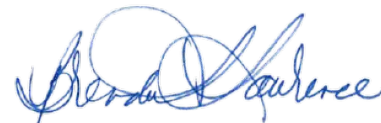
A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



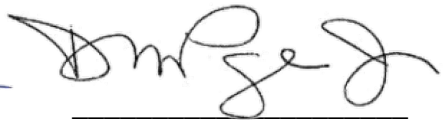
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.
Member of Congress



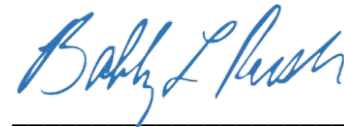
Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

CC: Brenda Mallory, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
Cecelia R. Martinez, PhD, Senior Director for Environmental Justice, Council on
Environmental Quality
Ambassador Susan Rice, Director, White House Domestic Policy Council

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2021

Dear President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, and Majority Leader Schumer,

As we work with the White House to deliver on the Build Back Better Agenda, we—the Democratic Members of the House Committee on Agriculture—wanted to highlight the critical investments we have included in our portions of the budget reconciliation process. These investments are essential to maintaining President Biden’s promise to “build back better” not just in urban and suburban communities, but also in rural and agricultural communities across the nation. As such, we respectfully urge that these provisions be maintained in any version of the *Build Back Better Act* passed by Congress.

The provisions included in the agriculture portion of the *Build Back Better Act* will make transformative investments that will benefit agricultural producers and rural communities for years and decades to come in the areas of agricultural research, rural development, renewable energy, biofuels, conservation, and forestry, as well as providing debt relief and assistance to economically distressed, at risk, and historically underserved farmers and producers.

America has been the world leader in agricultural research and innovation, but that position is at risk if we do not make key investments in research and education programs and our agricultural research facilities to help mitigate the impacts of climate change on our food and fiber production. These scholarships and investments will help train the next generation of agricultural scientists and specialists and ensure equity in agriculture by developing a diverse pipeline of agriculture professionals.

The Build Back Better agenda put a special emphasis on ensuring that rural communities and our communities at risk in rural areas be provided with the tools to address the need for clean drinking water, a transition to renewable energy sources, encouraging energy efficiency efforts, and continuing a role for biofuels in our transportation system.

The funding provided for climate-smart agriculture practices will help to address the fact that our current farm bill conservation programs are already oversubscribed with continuing backlogs that show the demand from producers and landowners willing to undertake efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and rebuild soil carbon.

We have also included a historic investment that will allow USDA’s Forest Service to be more responsive and proactive in their efforts to mitigate the disastrous wildfire years that have ravaged our Western states and to work with their partners on the needs of state and private forests, including reaching out to underserved private forest landowners.

As we work towards a path forward, we encourage you to keep these crucial investments in place, and we look forward to any further discussions on the importance these investments will have, especially as we prepare to write the next farm bill.

Sincerely,

Rep. DAVID SCOTT, *Chairman*

Rep. Jim Costa

Rep. James P. McGovern

Rep. Filemon Vela

Rep. Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.

Rep. Abigail Spanberger

Rep. Jahana Hayes

Rep. Antonio Delgado

Rep. Bobby L. Rush

Rep. Chellie Pingree

Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

Rep. Ann M. Kuster

Rep. Cheri Bustos

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney

Rep. Stacey E. Plaskett

Rep. Tom O'Halleran

Rep. Salud Carbajal



Rep. Ro Khanna



Rep. Al Lawson, Jr.



Rep. J. Luis Correa



Rep. Angie Craig



Rep. Josh Harder



Rep. Cynthia Axne



Rep. Kim Schrier M.D.



Rep. Jimmy Panetta



Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick



Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.



FETZER VINEYARDS.
— ESTD. IN 1968 —

IMPOSSIBLE™



May 25, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

We are writing as members of Ceres' Climate-Smart Agriculture and Healthy Soil Working Group. We represent a group of leading companies who have joined together to make the case for ambitious action on climate, focusing on land-based solutions that help combat climate change while growing the economy. As companies that partner with American farmers, ranchers, and foresters who produce the ingredients and raw materials for consumer products, we are particularly focused on how Congress can better support agriculture and forest lands in becoming a solution to climate change. **We urge you to include a substantial investment of at least \$200 billion over the next decade in support for climate mitigation and adaptation on farm, ranch and forestland in any infrastructure package or reconciliation bill that Congress is currently considering.** This amount will help scale work across hundreds of millions of acres of private working lands with millions of private landowners. The new management innovations that are needed require up-front capital, technical assistance and research & development to overcome the short-term costs most landowners face.

We are glad to see that Congress has turned its attention to infrastructure. Furthermore, we see tremendous opportunity for Congress to think big and pursue infrastructure investments that deliver good-paying clean energy jobs, environmental justice, and climate solutions that protect our economy and public health. *As companies, we believe that agriculture and forests are critical to achieving science-based emission reduction targets aligned with a 1.5-degree pathway globally.* Given that the U.S. is currently the world's second-largest GHG emitter and the U.S. agriculture sector is responsible for 10 percent of these emissions, there is an unprecedented opportunity for this sector to demonstrate climate leadership and lead the shift to net-zero.

Consumer brands in the private sector are working with the agriculture and forestry industry on emissions reductions, particularly through corporate climate commitments. We cannot achieve net-zero alone and welcome public-private partnerships to help scale quicker and across more working landscapes. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters need greater support from USDA programs tailored toward climate mitigation and adaptation while planning and implementing conservation activities. They are

essential if we are to achieve the kind of broad engagement across all agriculture and forestry sectors that is urgently needed to turn this sector into a climate solution.

We appreciate that the Biden-Harris Infrastructure proposal calls for “positioning the U.S. agricultural sector to lead the shift to net-zero emissions while providing new economic opportunities for farmers.” Unfortunately, we also know that many of the current USDA programs that support farmers, ranchers, and foresters in climate mitigation and adaptation are *greatly oversubscribed*. We believe it is essential that any infrastructure package or reconciliation instructions to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry ***include \$200 billion over the next decade to support new and existing USDA conservation, research, renewable energy, tree planting, and food systems initiatives. This funding should be in addition to robust funding for rural development programs including investments in USDA rural water, broadband, business, and electric programs.***

Many of our companies are already working with USDA to advance and co-finance strategies to engage farmers, ranchers and foresters in climate mitigation and adaptation. It is imperative for the public and private sectors to invest today to achieve the vision of a healthier future where American agriculture and forestry are leading the way towards net-zero emissions across the entire U.S. economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Danone North America
Fetzer Vineyards
Impossible Foods
Indigo Agriculture
Nestlé
Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)
Stonyfield Organic**

CC:

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture

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

Legislating Today for a Better Climate Tomorrow

September 23, 2021

Four ways the bipartisan infrastructure bill and budget reconciliation bill will deliver forests for climate

By Jad Daley, American Forests president and chief executive officer

Sometimes our dreams come true in unexpected forms. After almost 15 years of building toward a big federal policy move on forests for climate, we have an administration that is proposing the climate-smartest forest strategy yet, and a Congress that has proposed \$50 billion — yes, with a “b” — for everything from wildfire resilience to vast reforestation initiatives in landscapes and cities alike. And all through the lens of equity and job creation, including a new Civilian Climate Corps.

While not the traditional climate bill so many have waited for, the two infrastructure bills currently moving in Congress — the [bipartisan infrastructure bill](#) and the [budget reconciliation bill](#) — together actually propose a bigger investment in natural climate solutions than offered by prior climate bills, and that is the case for some other climate solutions, too. We need everyone on board right now to push this vital climate investment over the line.

As a veteran of the seemingly promising cap-and-trade climate bills a decade ago, I understand why some have been slow to wake up to the full import of this moment. After all, conventional wisdom has wrongly assumed the only way we could pay for serious climate investment would be with a new carbon pricing mechanism.

While a carbon price could help in multiple ways, the current package of infrastructure and budget reconciliation legislation has shown that we can invest in climate solutions at a vast scale the same way we invest in other priorities — from the United States Treasury. A climate crisis this dire deserves urgent investment just like a pandemic or a war or a crumbling bridge.

And what a forest-climate investment plan Congress has laid out, perfectly aligned with the direction set by the Biden-Harris administration! Here are four key ways the bipartisan infrastructure bill and budget reconciliation bill will deliver forests for climate.

Big move on wildfire resilience. The immensity of our climate-fueled wildfire crisis, especially in the western states, is overwhelming. [Wildfire extent has doubled in recent decades](#), and the greater intensity of wildfires is leaving more areas so scorched that they cannot recover without active reforestation. How bad is it? The first two fires ever to [burn clear through the Sierra](#)

[Nevada](#) happened this year, made possible because tinder dry forests are burning at higher elevations than ever before.

This is a disaster for our communities, our water supplies, our forest carbon sink, and forest resources from timber to recreation opportunities. The U.S. Forest Service has estimated that [we need to restore 50 million acres](#) at an approximate cost of \$50 billion to get on top of this issue.

When taken together, the infrastructure and reconciliation bills meet this historic moment with more than \$30 billion dollars to restore public and private forests alike via thinning and prescribed fire, guided by climate-smart principles and prioritization. This would create more than 840,000 jobs, save lives, and slow this growing emissions leak from our forest carbon sink.

Reforestation writ large. Equally important, these bills include unprecedented investment in restoring burned areas and other lands in need of reforestation. This includes the [REPLANT Act](#), a provision integrated into the infrastructure bill, which would quadruple dedicated funding to the U.S. Forest Service for reforestation so it can clear a 4 million-acre backlog on National Forest System lands, largely driven by wildfire, and keep up into the future. Timely reforestation will quickly restart natural carbon sequestration and water filtration on burned and degraded pieces of our national forests, and help avert the damaging mudslides that often originate from them — such as [the disastrous mudslides](#)

[this summer in Colorado](#). This investment in reforestation is backed by a \$300 million investment in implementing our national seed and seedling strategy, so we have the right trees to plant.

Putting working forests to work on climate. More than half of America's forests are in private hands, with the largest share held by family forest owners. These bills put our private lands to work on climate with \$1 billion for carbon incentives to landowners, including those who have been historically underserved like the members of the [Sustainable Forestry and African-American Land Retention Network](#). This will provide a straightforward way to provide direct payment for landowners to undertake specified [carbon-friendly forestry practices](#).

These incentives are complemented by an unprecedented investment in science and data to make sure we are doing this right. This begins with a \$550 million investment to modernize the U.S. Forest Service's [Forest Inventory and Analysis Program](#), our nation's primary source of forest carbon data, and use that data to prioritize and benchmark the most effective forest carbon practices. This is complemented with \$1 billion for wood innovation research and development to find new ways to turn diverse wood products into additional carbon storage and other GHG savings.

Tree and jobs for everyone. Lastly, consider the Build Back Better package's totally unprecedented \$3 billion investment in planting Tree Equity across our cities to address climate-fueled extreme heat and air pollution. This matches a [new White House initiative](#) on extreme heat, and comes amidst shocking developments like the Pacific Northwest heat wave this summer that [killed hundreds of people](#) across famously temperate cities such as Portland.

Trees are our best natural defense against heat and air pollution, reducing temperatures underneath as much as 45 degrees Fahrenheit, and averting 670,000 incidents of respiratory illness per year. As shown by American Forests' [Tree Equity Score](#), communities of color have 33 percent less tree canopy, on average, and lower-income communities have 41 percent less. This has life or death consequences as heat deaths continue climbing, [already at 12,000 annually today with potential to reach more than 100,000 annually](#) this century.

The vital work of planting and caring for trees in high-need neighborhoods is a proven job creator, 25.7 jobs per \$1 million invested, according to recent research. The budget reconciliation bill captures this opportunity with a massive \$4.5 billion investment in a Civilian Climate Corps to help advance all of the work above, from wildfire resilience to Tree Equity. This new CCC will target youth populations most in need of these economic

opportunities, including urban youth from BIPOC communities, to build the natural climate solutions workforce of the future.

This partial tally of the massive, unprecedented forest-climate moves in the infrastructure and reconciliation bills should inspire you to action, if you are not already on board. You will have company. I am proud that 46 member organizations of the Forest-Climate Working Group, including diverse leaders among private landowners, forest products, government agencies, NGOs, researchers and carbon markets, have [spoken together in support](#) of these landmark forest provisions. Now is our time to stand all together as One Nation Under Trees and get this done. Our climate cannot wait, and neither can our communities.

Opinion: Better-managed forests are critical for preventing wildfires

President Biden speaks at a meeting about wildfires in the Western United States, at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on June 30. (Demetrius Freeman/The Washington Post)

September 19, 2021 at 5:06 p.m. EDT

The Sept. 14 news article “[Biden stresses climate action in visit to fire-ravaged West](#)” called attention to President Biden’s tour of Western states being devastated by wildfires and the growing awareness that climate change is helping to fuel this crisis. Mr. Biden has correctly named the solution as equal parts action to slow climate change and climate-informed management to help our forests become more resilient.

The article failed to note that the bipartisan infrastructure bill contains [\\$8 billion](#) for wildfire resilience on public and private lands alike. The reconciliation package [approved](#) by the House Agriculture Committee includes an additional \$24 billion. This is above and beyond billions of dollars for a new Civilian Climate Corps to help accomplish this work.

These historic proposals demonstrate that the Biden administration and its allies in Congress are ready to move into action at the scale of the problem. We do not have a moment to lose.

Jad Daley, *Alexandria*

The writer is president and chief executive of American Forests.



FOREST-CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

September 8, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
The Capitol, Room S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-232
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

The undersigned members of the Forest-Climate Working Group are writing to urge inclusion of important forest and forest products provisions in the budget reconciliation package currently under development. The [Forest-Climate Working Group](#) represents a diverse coalition of 78 member organizations spanning the entire forest sector, including state foresters, private landowners, forestry and forest products associations, carbon markets, academia, and national NGOs. We have worked together since 2007 to advance climate-smart forest policies, providing informed and balanced recommendations that are rooted in science, equity, and our unique expertise as forest practitioners.

America's forests, both public and privately owned, are an important part of our nation's natural, social and built infrastructure, including natural climate solutions. The reconciliation package has the potential to protect and grow our forests in ways that will enhance their climate action contributions, building from the nearly 15 percent of our nation's carbon dioxide emissions currently captured in our forests and forest products each year, as reported in the U.S. EPA Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Investing in forests for climate action will also enhance their capacity to address other environmental and natural infrastructure needs, such as cleaning our air and water, lowering surface temperatures and energy use, and serving as a home to wildlife. Investments in forests will generate as many as 40 jobs per million dollars invested.

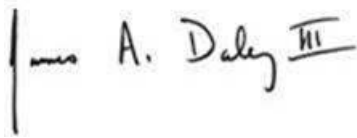
To capture this potential, the reconciliation package should make significant investments to benefit public and privately owned forests. In terms of both scale and scope, important forest funding provisions included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework provide a start in this direction. With a broader and more robust set of commitments to forest-based climate solutions, the reconciliation bill has the potential to dramatically increase the climate change benefits delivered by U.S. forests and forest products. Great care is also needed to safeguard the important investments of private forest owners by ensuring that tax policies preserve the economic value of timberland and the ability to transfer timberland intergenerationally, as well as recognize and incentivize the important environmental, social and economic outcomes they provide, including carbon sequestration and storage.

Specifically, the Forest-Climate Working Group encourages you to take the following five steps to champion our forest infrastructure in the reconciliation process:

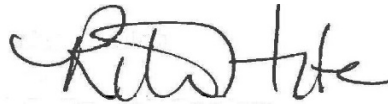
- ***Invest in Conserving, Restoring, and Growing America's Forests***
Increased investment in public and private forests is essential if we are to maintain and expand healthy and resilient forest cover and continue to reap the benefits of forests' contribution to cleaning our air and water and providing abundant wildlife habitat. Necessary investment includes increased funding to reduce wildfire risk, to improve conservation and easement programs, and to provide tax and other incentives for forest owners to increase carbon benefits from forest management. Additionally, expanding tree cover through reforestation and investments in nurseries and seedling production will accelerate the potential for carbon removal from the atmosphere.
- ***Reduce the Carbon Footprint of America's Built Infrastructure***
Expanding the use of low-carbon-footprint building materials, like wood, using material-agnostic goals for reducing embodied carbon and based on independent, scientifically sound life cycle assessments will support rural and urban economies and the environment, while also helping the U.S. achieve its climate goals. Increased research investments in life cycle assessment and building code revisions are needed to drive preference for low-carbon-footprint materials.
- ***Invest in Rural America's Communities***
There are over 18,000 small and rural communities in America with populations between 2,500 and 25,000. Investing in these communities, through expansion of forest sector job training and creation of green spaces, will provide job opportunities and improve quality of life for rural populations.
- ***Invest in Forest Climate Data and Applied Science***
All climate investments require good scientific information delivered to the right users and decision makers. This includes baseline forest data through the U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA). Additional investment is needed to enhance the FIA program through means such as remote sensing, and to develop applied scientific information through forest-climate research, such as climate-driven threats to forests as revealed by vulnerability assessments.
- ***Invest in America's Urban Forests***
Trees are an important part of our urban infrastructure and critical to reducing energy costs and addressing our most pressing urban climate issues. In communities across America, the lowest income areas within urban environments and communities of color systematically have the greatest deficit of trees and green spaces. These areas should be prioritized as part of increased urban forest investment and should include jobs and training for local residents to maintain the urban forests.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to working with you to realize the full potential of America's forests.

Sincerely,



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President and CEO
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American Forest Foundation
American Forests
American Wood Council
Arbor Day Foundation
Binational Softwood Lumber Council
Biomass Power Association
Blue Source LLC
Boise Cascade Company
Carbon 180
Chinook Forest Partners
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Composite Panel Association
Drax Group PLC
EFM Investments & Advisory
Environmental Defense Fund
Enviva
Forest Landowners Association
Forest Stewards Guild
Hardwood Federation
Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners
Association
L&C Carbon
Land Trust Alliance
Minnesota Forestry Association
Molpus Woodlands Group

National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest
Resources Programs
National Woodland Owners Association
New England Forestry Foundation
Open Space Institute
Pingree Associates
PotlatchDeltic
Rayonier
RenewWest
Society of American Foresters
Sustainable Forestry and African American
Land Retention Network
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
The Forestland Group
The Lyme Timber Company
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Westervelt Company
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Western Landowners Alliance
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Weyerhaeuser



FOREST-CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

Statement of the Forest-Climate Working Group House Agriculture Committee Passage of Budget Reconciliation September 16, 2021

The undersigned members of the [Forest-Climate Working Group](#) (FCWG), a forest sector-wide coalition founded in 2007, issued the following statement in response to the U.S. House Agriculture Committee's passage on Monday, September 13, of a budget reconciliation package containing \$40 billion dollars in forest-related provisions.

“The House Agriculture Committee’s budget reconciliation package stands as the most significant legislative action yet to leverage forests and forest products as a powerful nature-based solution to help combat climate change. The bill’s \$40 billion dollars in forest-focused investments will dramatically bolster our sector’s ability to increase resilient carbon storage in America’s forests and forest products and better protect human and natural communities from climate impacts. We commend the committee for standing with the forest community in taking this bold action.

The bill provides support for several FCWG priorities, including:

- Leveraging forestry best practices to promote wildfire resilience and recovery.
- Incentivizing private landowner actions to increase carbon sequestration
- Providing grants to foster innovation within the wood products industry.
- Investing in applied forest-climate science, as well as foundational research and technological innovation to enhance the U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis Program.
- Funding urban forestry initiatives to provide equitable tree cover across our rapidly heating cities.
- Catalyzing workforce development by building a new Civilian Climate Corps.

Since 2007, the Forest-Climate Working Group has brought together every part of our sector to provide unified support for federal policies that can increase the power of America’s forests and forest products as a natural climate solution. The investments made in the House Agriculture Committee’s package represent [priorities](#) that the Forest-Climate Working Group has long supported, and – combined with additional forest investments from the bipartisan infrastructure bill – will help put America on track to delivering impactful, sustainable forest-based climate solutions.”



Signed:

American Forest Foundation	National Wildlife Federation
American Forests	National Woodland Owners Association
American Wood Council	NCX (Natural Capital Exchange)
Arbor Day Foundation	New England Forestry Foundation
Biomass Power Association	Northern Forest Center
BlueSource LLC	Open Space Institute
Boise Cascade Company	Pingree Associates
Carbon180	PotlatchDeltic
Chinook Forest Partners	Rayonier
Coalitions & Collaboratives, Inc.	RenewWest
Drax Group PLC	Society of American Foresters
EFM Investments & Advisory	Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Network (SFLR)
Environmental Defense Fund	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Enviva Biomass	The Forestland Group
Forest Landowners Association	The Lyme Timber Company LP
Forest Stewards Guild	The Nature Conservancy
Green Diamond Resource Company	The Trust for Public Land
Hardwood Federation	The Westervelt Company
L&C Carbon	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Land Trust Alliance	Western Landowners Alliance
Molpus Woodlands Group	Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
National Alliance of Forest Owners	
National Association of Forest Service Retirees	
National Association of State Foresters	
National Association of University Forest Resources Programs	

Salesforce Supports Climate Investments Outlined in U.S. Budget Reconciliation Package

Salesforce believes that the United States must take action to avoid the most devastating impacts of the climate crisis. The [IPCC's recently released climate report](#) states that the world is “code red for humanity.” This urgent call for action means that the United States must reduce emissions now to avoid the most devastating impacts of the climate emergency.

Salesforce today announced its support of the climate investments outlined in the proposed reconciliation package, recognizing the critical returns they will deliver for the economy, the climate, and global communities.

Salesforce is committed to the global goal of achieving a just and equitable transition to Net Zero, in line with a 1.5°C degree future. The company also supports the goals of the Paris Agreement and the most recent commitment by the United States to reduce emissions by 50-52% by 2030 and achieve Net Zero by 2050.

The climate-focused elements of the proposed reconciliation package represent significant strides toward delivering on this commitment — decarbonizing the nation’s infrastructure, prioritizing high-quality, good-paying jobs, investing in community resilience, and advancing environmental justice to deliver a sustainable future.

Salesforce has been committed to a [clean energy future since 2013](#). The company will meet a target of 100% renewable energy this year, with a larger, long-term energy goal of building a future where renewable energy is powering the world around-the-clock. In addition, the company is a vocal supporter of the Clean Electricity Performance Program which, along with renewable energy tax credits and needed investments in transmission infrastructure, would create an efficient, 21st Century electricity grid and is expected to place the United States on track to meet an 80% clean electricity target by 2030.

Salesforce also supports the proposed Civilian Climate Corps as an opportunity to create hundreds of thousands of climate jobs and enhance efforts — especially in underserved communities — to fight climate change. From installing solar panels and weatherizing buildings, to building trails and restoring natural ecosystems, to helping prevent catastrophic wildfires, the Civilian Climate Corps would put Americans to work building a sustainable and equitable future.

Salesforce recognizes the critical role of enhancing community resilience in the face of climate change. As climate change and sea-level rise accelerate, extreme weather events are becoming more intense and frequent, and [communities of color are experiencing the worst impacts of these disasters](#). A robust investment in coastal restoration and resilience projects would create high-quality, good-paying jobs—coastal restoration work is labor-intensive, with jobs that cannot be

mechanized or exported—and sequester carbon, all while protecting coastal communities from the escalating climate crisis.

Nature plays a critical role in combating climate change, which is why Salesforce is committed to conserving, restoring and growing 100 million trees by 2030 in partnership with 1T.org. And is why the company also continues to advocate for investments in conservation, drought, and forestry programs that would sequester carbon emissions, enhance forestry management, and improve wildfire resilience and recovery.

We need action, collaboration and investments **now** to step up to the urgent challenge of climate change. Salesforce is committed to advancing science-based climate policy — from reconciliation to the bipartisan infrastructure package — that puts the United States on track for a 1.5° future.

It's easy to focus on the cost of climate action, but the increasing severity and frequency of unprecedented, deadly and costly extreme weather events make it crystal clear that the cost of inaction is far higher.

MEMO: Build Back Better Act Must Fully Fund Forestry, Green Space Initiatives

Without Support, Vulnerable Communities Left Unprotected Against Deadly Effects of Climate Crisis

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Contact:

Ian Brickey: (202) 675-6270, ian.brickey@sierraclub.org

-SIERRA CLUB FEDERAL POLICY TEAM

President Biden's Build Back Better Act is a once-in-a-generation investment in the effort to tackle the climate crisis.

One of the important but lesser known aspects of the package put together by House Democrats is the nearly \$3.5 billion in funding to support urban and community forestry and green space development across the country, which are essential efforts for protecting our most vulnerable communities from the worst consequences of the climate crisis.

The Sierra Club applauds the House of Representatives for investing in these vital efforts to expand green space and tree planting in urban communities, and we once again call on the Senate to **maintain full funding for these essential programs in the final reconciliation bill.**

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT MUST FULLY FUND FORESTRY, GREEN SPACE INITIATIVES

Without Support, Vulnerable Communities Left Unprotected Against Deadly Effects of the Climate Crisis

**** Senior Sierra Club policy staff and spokespeople are available to discuss the critical need for maintaining full support for urban green space programs. ****

PROMOTING GREEN SPACES AND TREE PLANTING IS ESSENTIAL FOR TAKING ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The following programs that support green space development and community tree planting **must be included** in the final reconciliation package **at full funding levels:**

- **\$3 billion for the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program:** Tree planting works to decrease the effects of the climate crisis in urban communities by increasing tree canopy cover within these neighborhoods, mitigating the urban heat island effect. This program currently serves more than 200 million people in more than 7,700 communities across the U.S. through the development and maintenance of local urban forestry programs.
- **\$50 million for activities to improve Forest Carbon Monitoring Technologies and \$50 million for the inventory of old and mature forests:** These programs are crucial in delivering on the science necessary to protect our old and mature trees, which are the largest sources of natural carbon sequestration, and also developing the technology we need to monitor that sequestration.
- **\$100 million for Urban Parks through the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program:** White neighborhoods are three times more likely to have access to nearby nature than communities of color, and the parks and green spaces in wealthier neighborhoods are likely to be larger than the parks and green spaces in less-affluent communities. ORLP provides direct support for building new and maintaining existing parks in urban communities that often lack green space and tree coverage.

- **\$100 million for the Every Kid Outdoors program:** The Every Kid Outdoors program currently provides fourth graders and their families with free access to national parks and public lands and waters. Providing EKO with dedicated funding for the first time in its history would provide safe transportation for children and families to public lands and waters, offer more robust outdoors programming, and increase access to the outdoors for people with disabilities.

In their draft of the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill, the House Natural Resources Committee included \$200 million in funding for programs promoting urban green spaces and tree planting, and the House Agriculture Committee included more than \$3 billion for similar programs. **Faced with calls from conservative Democrats to cut the size of the package, Sierra Club is calling on Senators to retain full funding for these programs.** They are essential efforts to tackle the climate crisis and protect communities that are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The effects of the climate crisis are becoming increasingly devastating, and this is especially true for urban communities, lower-income communities, and communities of color. Years of disinvestment have left many of these communities with minimal green space (from trees to parks), making them particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Without sufficient green space and tree coverage, communities are left sicker, poorer, and hotter than communities with ample green space and trees. In the U.S., community tree coverage and green space location largely correlates with race and wealth, meaning lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color usually don't have as many trees as wealthier and whiter neighborhoods. Communities with more pavement than green space are more vulnerable to potentially deadly effects of climate change like flooding, polluted air, and the urban heat island effect.

Trees and green spaces are essential to maintaining healthy communities and ecosystems. Federal programs that support urban forestry and green space preservation are key to making these vulnerable communities more resilient to the climate crisis and building up the critical green infrastructure we need to take on climate change. The Sierra Club urges Senators to maintain funding for these critical programs as they consider a final version of the package.

THE DEVASTATING CLIMATE IMPACTS OUR MOST Vulnerable Communities Face

Without federal action, the following effects of climate change will increasingly devastate vulnerable urban communities, communities of color, and lower-income communities:

- **Flooding:** Urban communities are already vulnerable to flash floods, coastal floods, and river floods, but they are also vulnerable to the unique phenomenon of "urban flooding" when rainfall overwhelms stormwater drainage capacity. Climate change leads to more frequent and heavier rainfall, higher sea levels, and more frequent and more powerful hurricanes, all of which increase the likelihood of flooding in urban areas.
- **Dirty Air:** A lack of trees and green spaces leaves communities with less green infrastructure necessary for removing pollutants from the air, such as those caused by the burning of dirty fossil fuels. According to the WHO, ambient air pollution accounts for an estimated 4.2 million deaths globally per year due to stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, acute and chronic respiratory diseases.
- **Urban Heat Islands:** The urban heat island effect is a phenomenon that can raise temperatures in cities by several degrees compared with their surroundings. An overwhelming presence of concrete and impervious structures combined with a lack of green space and tree coverage can make some communities feel 10-15 degrees hotter than neighborhoods with more green space. Studies suggest urban heat island warming will probably be equivalent to an additional amount of warming in cities equal to half of the warming already caused by climate change by the year 2050.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

- MEMO: President Biden is the one who can deliver the climate wins we need
- MEMO: Sierra Club's Priorities for Clean Transportation Investments in the Build Back Better Act

About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with millions of members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.

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Ian Brickey

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October 19, 2021

Senator Joe Manchin
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Re: Ski Industry Support for Climate Change Solutions in Infrastructure/Reconciliation Bills

Dear Senator Manchin:

I am reaching out from the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) to underscore the ski industry's support for climate change solutions in the **Infrastructure and Reconciliation** bills. As businesses whose operations rely on the natural environment, ski areas could really use your help with bold legislative action to address climate change. Ski areas are major employers in rural communities. There are ski areas in 37 states, including 5 in your home state of West Virginia. From the \$55 billion we contribute to the U.S. economy to health and wellness benefits for millions of people, skiing and snowboarding are something special that we want future generations to enjoy.

We support the inclusion of numerous climate change provisions in these critical bills, including: major investment in EV charging infrastructure and power infrastructure; the Clean Electricity Performance Program (CEPP); a price on carbon and carbon import tax fee on carbon-intensive goods imported from abroad; a clean energy tax overhaul; reduced emissions from federal buildings and vehicle fleets; energy efficiency rebates; a Civilian Climate Corps program; environmental justice; and increased funding of U.S. Forest Service wildfire recovery efforts.

Climate change is driving increased operational costs for ski areas. Shorter and shifting winter seasons and unreliable snowpack necessitate increased investments in snowmaking, water resources, water facilities, and year-round recreation activities. The devastating impacts of wildfires in the west have resulted in property and natural resources damage, property insurance premium hikes, and closures of resort operations due to smoke, fires or the threat of fires. Flooding has resulted in severe structural and erosion damage at ski areas. These are just some of the examples of how climate change is impacting our bottom line now.

In addition to engaging in advocacy, ski areas across the country are taking action by setting ambitious science-based emissions targets and working to reduce their carbon footprints. Over 50 ski areas participate in the industry's Climate Challenge, including Snowshoe Mountain, West Virginia. NSAA is pleased to share with you our [2021 Climate Challenge Annual Report](#). Ski areas are leaders in taking action on climate change, but we can't do this alone. We need Congress' help, and we need your help, with systemic change and the broad-scale solutions included in the Infrastructure and Reconciliation bills.

Your action in the next few weeks can help position our country for a successful, net-zero future and support a healthy outdoor recreation experience for all.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Geraldine Link

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geraldine Link', written in a cursive style.

Director of Public Policy

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

October 19, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Outdoor recreation community reconciliation priorities

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the human-powered outdoor recreation community, thank you for your efforts in leading a generational investment in our country's infrastructure—including public lands and waters—and, most importantly, towards addressing the climate crisis. The FY22 budget reconciliation process and the Build Back Better Act are an urgent and fleeting opportunity to mobilize a government-wide and nationwide effort to address the climate crisis. This crisis gravely affects our public lands and waters, while, at the same time, investments in our public lands and waters will make a meaningful contribution towards climate resilience while supporting equitable and sustainable access to the outdoors and the outdoor recreation economy.

In addition, we support a full range of investments to address the climate crisis, recognizing that many of these investments will be outside of our direct organizational expertise in public lands and waters conservation, access, and management. To this end, we support the **Clean Electricity Performance Program (§ 30411)**. If this provision becomes politically unworkable, we strongly support other aggressive measures to move our country towards President Biden's goal of 100 percent clean electricity by 2035.



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Many of the investments proposed through the Build Back Better Act concerning public lands and waters, in addition to addressing the climate crisis, will be tremendously valuable in ensuring equitable access to the outdoors, supporting the outdoor recreation economy, and advancing the Biden administration's conservation priorities as articulated in the *Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* and the subsequent *Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful* report.

As Congress works to advance the Build Back Better Act and related infrastructure package, we write to share our perspectives on the items we believe to be the most critically needed and potentially meaningful investments. These items, described in greater detail below, include:

- The Civilian Climate Corps (§§ 70202, 70509, § 11001(a)(15));
- National Forest System restoration and fuels reduction projects (§ 11001);
- Conservation of threatened landscapes (Oak Flat, § 70201; Grand Canyon, § 70204; Thompson Divide, § 70211; Chaco Canyon, § 70212; Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, § 70804);
- Fossil fuel and hardrock mining reforms (§§ 70804, 70807);
- State and private forestry conservation programs (§ 11003);
- Improved NEPA implementation (§§ 70401, 11001(a)(10));
- Targeted investments in equitable access to the outdoors (§§ 70206, 70207, 11002(a)(4));
- Climate resilience funding for DOI and USDA (§§ 70208, 70209, 11002);
- Federal priority stream gauges (§ 70306); and
- DOI fire mitigation (§ 70205).

Moving forward, we ask that Congress act with purpose to seize this narrow opportunity and advance President Biden's vision around investing in climate resilience, conservation, and equitable and sustainable recreation access.

House Natural Resources provisions

Outdoor Alliance strongly supports the investments proposed by the House Natural Resources Committee. These proposals make urgently needed investments in our public lands and waters infrastructure, support the conservation of invaluable



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landscapes, and help to ensure that taxpayers receive a fair return for natural resource development activities. In particular, we strongly support:

- **Civilian Climate Corps (§ 70202, § 70509 (NOAA)).** A modern CCC will enable a strong and integrated approach to climate change, conservation, equitable and sustainable recreation access, and local economic development. Tackling the impacts of climate change, such as the increased risk of mega-fires, while restoring ecosystems, improving recreation access, and creating new jobs, is a winning strategy for moving America forward on environmental resilience and away from the pandemic-induced economic downturn. The CCC would create new job opportunities in the rapidly growing clean energy, ecosystem restoration, and recreation industries for both urban centers and rural communities, while at the same time inspiring a new generation of conservationists and healthy outdoor recreation enthusiasts.
- **Conservation of threatened landscapes (Oak Flat, § 70201; Grand Canyon, § 70204; Thompson Divide, § 70211; Chaco Canyon, § 70212; Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, § 70804).** Sections 70201, 70204, 70211, 70212, and 70804 protect landscapes under direct threat from ill-advised resource development activities in conflict with significant cultural, ecological and recreational values. Each of these sections is responsive to significant public outcry surrounding threats to these landscapes and process towards their protection.
- **Fossil fuel resources (§ 70804).** Outdoor Alliance strongly supports provisions ensuring a more appropriate return for the public for fossil fuel development activities on public lands and waters. These additional returns are entirely appropriate given the contributions of these activities to climate change, but also because of the direct impacts of activities like speculative oil and gas leasing on other resource values, including outdoor recreation. Particularly over the course of the previous administration, direct conflicts with other resource values have abounded, and the provisions in this bill section will restore a more appropriate balance among public lands and waters values. Given overwhelming community support—and the imperatives vividly illustrated by the recent oil spill in Southern California—



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we strongly support the provisions to end new oil and gas leasing on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Eastern Gulf coasts.

- **Hardrock mining (§ 70807).** Hardrock mining has a long history of deleterious effects on conservation and recreational resource values on public lands and waters. Those effects are exacerbated by the market distortions that stem from giving public resources away for free and a failure to hold industry accountable for resource damage. The reforms included in the Build Back Better Act will help to ensure that mining proceeds in a manner more cognizant of other resource values and provide much needed resources for addressing ongoing degradation caused by past mining activity.
- **Efficient and effective NEPA implementation (§ 70401).** The outdoor recreation community strongly supports the National Environmental Policy Act as a means of facilitating public participation in land management decision-making and as a means of ensuring that decisions are informed by environmental values and strong science. We also work, at times, in the development of recreation infrastructure that requires navigating the NEPA process, and we can share the frustration of stakeholders finding the process to be slow and challenging. We believe strongly that the path forward is additional resources for the land management agencies to conduct environmental analysis and look for efficiencies that remain respectful of NEPA's core values. We wholeheartedly support these investments.
- **Urban parks (§ 70206).** Urban parks and green spaces are essential community infrastructure. They support mental and physical health benefits and can create new, safe access points for traditionally underserved communities to enjoy spending time in the outdoors.
- **Every Kid Outdoors (§ 70207).** Funding for the Every Kid Outdoors program will help ensure access to public lands for grade school-aged children, giving more youth the opportunity to connect with their public lands and waters and develop an appreciation for nature and a stewardship and conservation ethic.
- **Climate resilience funding for the National Parks Service and Bureau of Land Management (§§ 70208 and 70209).** Public lands and waters are



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facing unprecedented effects as a result of climate change, and those changes in turn are undermining conservation and recreation values. Land management agencies must be adequately resourced to mitigate the deterioration of these invaluable resources and the values they support, including recreation.

- **Wildfire (§ 70205).** Wildfire increasingly threatens landscapes, communities, recreation opportunities, and the ability of land management agencies to fulfill their other stewardship responsibilities. We strongly support additional investments in ecosystem and community protection for the Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as investments in forest health technology.
- **Federal priority stream gauges (§ 70306).** River and stream gauges are critical for ensuring community safety and monitoring the effects of land use and climate changes on stream flow. They are also invaluable for paddlers and a means of facilitating recreational access to rivers and streams, as many sections are safe or navigable only at particular water levels.

Committee on Agriculture provisions

Title I of the Build Back Better Act includes important provisions for restoring forest health, supporting climate resilience, and supporting equitable and sustainable recreation access. In particular, Outdoor Alliance strongly supports:

- **National Forest System restoration and fuels reduction projects (§ 11001).** Wildfire has become an ongoing calamity across much of the United States, particularly in the West, and providing resources to the USDA Forest Service to reduce fire risk in an ecologically sound manner is an urgent priority. Moreover, as fire has taken up an ever larger portion of the agency's budget, it has become more challenged in managing its other stewardship responsibilities. We strongly support these critically needed investments in the Forest Service's capacity to address these challenges. Additionally, this section contains needed investments in the capacity of the Forest Service to achieve conservation goals and protect and enhance recreation opportunities, investing in rural communities and providing more equitable



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access to the outdoors. Highlight of investments we strongly support within this section, include:

- **Legacy Roads and Trails (§ 11001(a)(6));**
- **Land management planning and monitoring (§ 11001(a)(7));**
- **Trail maintenance (§11001(a)(8));**
- **Capital maintenance and improvements (§ 11001(a)(9));**
- **Efficient and effective NEPA implementation (§ 11001(a)(10));**
- **Protections for old-growth forests (§ 11001(a)(11));**
- **The Civilian Climate Corps (§ 11001(a)(15)); and**
- **Climate research and resiliency funding for USFS (§ 11002).**

Moreover, we greatly appreciate the emphasis in **§ 11001(b), Priority for Funding**, on projects that present the opportunity for meeting recreation objectives alongside the restoration purposes of identified projects. Combining recreation access and infrastructure maintenance and improvement with vegetation management and other forest system projects has the potential to realize tremendous efficiencies and make a meaningful difference in the accessibility, quality, and sustainability of recreation opportunities for all Americans.

- **State and private forestry conservation programs (§ 11003).** The Forest Legacy Program is a key tool administered by the Department of Agriculture in cooperation with state partners to protect forested areas. Within this voluntary program, states are enabled to permanently protect forested properties through conservation easements or direct acquisition. This program offers significant benefits to outdoor recreationists and communities by supporting sustainable forestry, protecting wildlife habitat, and enhancing access to recreation. Bill provisions will directly increase access to forested spaces across the U.S. by giving priority to projects that are located in areas where community members currently lack access to the benefits of forested spaces.
- **Grants to expand equitable outdoor access (§ 11002(a)(4)).** Outdoor Alliance strongly supports the provision to make grant funding available to Tribal, State, and local governments; nonprofits; and others to pursue expanded equitable outdoor access. This funding has the potential to



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

significantly improve recreation access for underserved communities, and we strongly support this investment.

- **Climate research and resiliency funding for the USDA Forest Service (§ 11002).** Public lands and waters are facing unprecedented effects as a result of climate change, and those changes in turn are undermining conservation and recreation values. The Forest Service must be adequately resourced to conduct targeted research on the impact of climate change on forest health in an effort to increase carbon storage in forests and to mitigate the deterioration of these invaluable resources and the values they support, including recreation.

* * *

Outdoor Alliance, our member organizations, and the outdoor recreation community are tremendously enthusiastic about the provisions outlined above and the potential for the Build Back Better Act to meaningfully improve people's lives, protect our public lands, and change the arc of our trajectory with regard to climate change, and we are keen to assist in any way.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Chief Executive Officer, Outdoor Alliance
Chris Winter, Executive Director, Access Fund
Beth Spilman, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Kent McNeill, CEO, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Todd Walton, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
Mitsu Iwasaki, Chief Executive Officer, American Alpine Club



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

Sarah Bradham, Interim Executive Director, the Mazamas
Keegan Young, Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club
Chad Nelson, Chief Executive Officer, Surfrider Foundation



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

About Outdoor Alliance

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of ten member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.



October 15, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Scott
Chair, Committee on Agriculture
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chair, Committee on Agriculture
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Chair Stabenow and Chair Scott:

We write today to support the sound investments in America's forests contained in the reconciliation package. Healthy natural and working forests on public and private lands provide many public benefits, but our forests are in crisis. Longer, more intense wildfire seasons impact public health and safety, water quality, wildlife habitat, recreation, hunting and fishing, and exacerbate the already troubling effects of climate change.

Wildfire is essential to many forest ecosystems in the United States, but the increasing frequency, size, and severity require significant action to sustain forests, protect the public, and prevent the conversion of forests from carbon sinks to sources of carbon emissions. Over the next decade we need to ramp up the pace and scale of fuel reduction and watershed health projects to treat an additional 20 million acres of National Forest System lands, and 30 million acres of other federal, state, tribal, and private lands. The reconciliation package makes that fiscal commitment.

We appreciate the Senate and House Agriculture Committees recognizing the need for substantial increases in wildfire resilience and watershed health, across all landscapes and ownership boundaries in the areas at greatest risk for wildfire; and your willingness to work with us to ensure that these dollars reach the ground as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Sincerely,

National Wildlife Federation

Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

The Nature Conservancy

Trout Unlimited

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

September 9, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Agriculture Committee Chair
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Stabenow, Chair Scott, Majority Leader Schumer, and Speaker Pelosi:

We appreciate the support from the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in recognizing the need for substantial increases in wildfire resilience, including science-based active forest management and fuel treatments, across all landscapes and ownership boundaries in the areas at greatest risk for wildfire.

America's trees and forests are a strategic national resource and a major portion of our country's natural infrastructure with vast potential as solutions for climate change, public health, and economic challenges. Healthy natural and working forests on public and private lands provide a number of public benefits, including clean air and water, enhanced wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities, watershed protection, timber production, and support to rural communities.

Natural occurring wildfire serves an important role for many forest ecosystems in the United States. However, catastrophic wildfire can have disastrous effects on forests and communities. Decades of effective fire suppression combined with historical management practices have limited natural occurring wildfire's ability to serve its function for many forest ecosystems, resulting in overstocked forests that are not resilient to wildfire, posing significant risk to surrounding communities. Exacerbated by climate change, insect and disease infestations, changing weather patterns, and the build-up of hazardous fuels, these forests are more susceptible to natural and human caused wildfire.

Addressing wildfire will also ensure forests are carbon sinks and sources of clean drinking water that foster rich biodiversity, while serving as economic engines to our communities and providing recreational opportunities for all Americans. Conserving healthy and working forests should include restoring forest resilience in response to drought, insects and disease on all lands, including public, private, and tribal lands.

Bold action is needed to sustain forests, protect public safety, and prevent the conversion of forests from carbon sinks to carbon emission sources. The scale of wildfires and their community impacts far outpace current efforts to prevent them and mitigate the damage they cause. The U.S. Forest Service researchers have identified the need to treat an additional 20 million acres of National Forest System lands, and an additional 30 million acres of other federal, state, tribal, and private lands to make significant progress in reducing extreme wildfire risk and building forest resilience.

It is critical that wildfire resilience is increased by ***at least*** 5 million acres each year ***in addition*** to what is now treated. The undersigned organizations recommend between ***\$50 billion to \$60 billion over the next ten years to meet the wildfire resilience goal.***

Unfortunately to date, investments in U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior wildfire resilience programs have not adequately addressed – and, thus not met the scale of the problem. By making significant investments in wildfire mitigation and forest resilience through the budget reconciliation process, Congress can help maintain our forests as carbon sinks, create green jobs nationwide, and decrease fire risk to communities. This work is vital for scaling up forest and wildfire resilience to the levels needed for a paradigm shift and includes engaging non-federal and federal partners in furthering the multiple-use approach of our public and private forests into the 21st century.

Thank you for your efforts as you highlight wildfire resilience in the reconciliation process. We look forward to continuing to work with you in supporting the resilience of all forests.

Sincerely,

American Forest Foundation

American Forests

National Association of Forest Service Retirees

National Association of State Foresters

National Wildlife Federation

Society of American Foresters

The Nature Conservancy

September 27, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear President Biden, Leader Schumer, and Speaker Pelosi:

We write to you today to express our support for wildlife recovery and public lands restoration provisions that restore and build resilience of nature-based infrastructure benefitting both wildlife and people included in the Build Back Better package that Congress will consider as part of budget reconciliation.¹ The dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss require bold action that focuses on programs rooted in sound science, with proven track records of success, and which achieve measurable results for long-term recovery and conservation of our nation's native plant and animal species. These programs will also provide millions of well-paying jobs throughout the country. Therefore, on behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we urge you to ensure that the following investments by the relevant House committees are preserved and passed in the final bill.

House Natural Resources Committee²

- \$340,000,000 for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to implement the Endangered Species Act (ESA), our nation's most effective tool for preventing extinction
 - \$75,000,000 for species recovery (§70601(a))³
 - \$75,000,000 for Candidate Conservation (§70601(b))
 - \$50,000,000 for Habitat Conservation Plans (§70602)
 - \$40,000,000 for interagency consultation pursuant to the ESA (§70603)
 - \$100,000,000 to help stop the slide toward extinction of four critically endangered groups of species – pollinators, freshwater mussels, island plants, and desert fish (§70604 *et seq.*)
- \$100,000,000 to FWS for the protection and restoration of grassland habitat (§70610)
- \$100,000,000 for FWS to make lands and waters more climate resilient by investing in projects that reduce damages from extreme weather events, address invasive species, and restore habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System and on state and local lands (§70608)
- \$10,000,000 to identify, conserve, and restore wildlife corridors (§70609)

¹ See S. Res. Con. 14

² <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/II/II00/20210902/114019/BILLS-117pih-CommitteePrint.pdf>

³ The original House Natural Resources Committee bill included \$150,000,000 for species recovery. Through an amendment adopted at the full Committee markup, \$75,000,000 was shifted to Candidate Conservation. We strongly urge that the recovery funding be restored.

- Repeal the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Oil and Gas Program and buy back leases that generated less than 0.1% of the promised revenue (§70804)
- \$3,000,000,000 to the Department of the Interior to establish and implement Civilian Climate Corps programs to restore and rehabilitate public lands and waters managed by Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management (§70202)
- \$9,500,000,000 to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to restore marine, estuarine, coastal, or Great Lake habitat, providing adaptation to climate change (§70501)
- \$400,000,000, to NOAA for climate resilience, habitat protection, and other habitat restoration projects to recover Pacific salmon (§70502)
- \$2,500,000,000 for all activities necessary to inventory, assess, decommission, reclaim, respond to hazardous substance releases on, and remediate abandoned locatable minerals mine land. (§70807)
- Reclamation Fee - each operator conducting hardrock mineral activities shall pay to the Secretary of the Interior a reclamation fee of 7 cents per ton of displaced material. (§70807)
- \$3,000,000 to revise rules and regulations to prevent undue degradation of public lands due to hardrock mining activities as authorized by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1701) and the Mining Law of 1872 (30 U.S.C. 22). (§70807)

House Agriculture Committee⁴

- \$450,000,000 for the Legacy Roads and Trails program of the Forest Service (§11001(6))
- \$100,000,000 to provide for more efficient and more effective environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (§11001(10))
- \$50,000,000 for the protection of ancient forests, including completing an inventory of old-growth forests within the National Forest System (§11001(11))
- \$50,000,000 to develop and carry out activities and tactics for the maintenance and restoration of habitat conditions necessary for the protection and recovery of at-risk species on National Forest System land in implementing Forest Service hazardous fuels reduction and other vegetation management programs and projects based on a science based analysis carried out by the Secretary (§11001(12))
- \$50,000,000 to carry out post-fire recovery plans that emphasize the use of locally adapted native plant materials to restore the ecological integrity of disturbed areas and do not include salvage logging (§11001(13))
- \$50,000,000 to develop and carry out non-lethal activities and tactics to reduce human-wildlife conflicts on National Forest System land (§11001(14))
- \$2,250,000,000 to be used for staffing, salaries, and other workforce needs to support the development of a Civilian Climate Corps for the purposes of managing National Forest System land (§11001(15))

We ask that you ensure this funding is included in the final legislation as the bill advances in both chambers. Each of these provisions would restore ecosystems and increase the climate resilience of our

⁴ <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AG/AG00/20210913/114043/BILLS-117SConRes14pp.pdf>

natural infrastructure. We also request that you consider further investments to create jobs while protecting wildlife and habitat.⁵ For instance, Chair Scott stated that the Agriculture Committee intends to add \$28 billion in conservation funding during floor consideration; we urge you to adopt that funding and include language that directs funding to agency practices that simultaneously support climate resilience and biodiversity.

Additionally, as one of the most effective tools for addressing biodiversity loss in the face of climate change, we request that you increase the investment to restore and conserve wildlife corridors to \$1 billion, including funding for the National Park Service, the Bureau Land of Land Management, and the United States Geological Survey.⁶ We also urge you to direct \$1 billion of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee's allocation toward imperiled species recovery programs at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM administers habitat for 2,768 special status species, and funding is desperately needed to prevent and reverse further population declines.

Finally, the development and inclusion of legislative sideboards to ensure these historic investments conserve wildlife and wild places is essential for long-term success. It is also incumbent on the Biden Administration to develop implementation plans that direct this much-needed funding to proper uses. Most notably, we urge you to create additional specificity for the Civilian Climate Corps programs to guarantee funds benefit lands, waters, and wildlife while creating well-paying jobs and long-term career opportunities throughout the country.⁷

We look forward to working with you to meet the climate and biodiversity crises head on by passing this landmark legislation.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Snake Preservation
Alaska Clean Water Advocacy
American Bird Conservancy
Animal Defenders International
Animal Welfare Institute
Animals & Society Institute
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
Animas Valley Institute
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Battle Creek Alliance/
Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue
Bird Conservation Network
Bonobo Conservation Initiative

Born Free USA
Boulder Rights of Nature, Inc.
Buffalo Field Campaign
Cahaba Riverkeeper
Californians for Western Wilderness
Cascades Raptor Center
Cascadia Wildlands
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Chesapeake Conservancy
Conservation Northwest
Conserve Southwest Utah
Defenders of Wildlife

⁵ [Final Congressional Wildlife Stimulus Letter_5-20.pdf: Wildlife Recovery and Public Lands Restoration Letter for Biden Transition_1_12_21_Corrected.pdf](#)

⁶ [Senate Budget Reconciliation letter on Wildlife Corridors_08_21.pdf](#)

⁷ [Final Congressional Letter for CCC Priorities 9_1_21.pdf](#)

Delaware Valley Ornithological Club
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Earthjustice
Eastern Coyote/Coywolf Research
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information Center
Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force
Fly Fishers International N. California Council
FOUR PAWS USA
Franciscan Action Network
Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends of the Bitterroot
Friends of the Clearwater
Gallatin Wildlife Association
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
Grazing Reform Project
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Hoosier Environmental Council
Humane Society Legislative Fund
In Defense of Animals
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth
Island Institute
Jemez Peacemakers
Kentucky Natural Lands Trust
Los Padres ForestWatch
Maryland Ornithological Society
Montana Wilderness Education School
National Wolfwatcher Coalition
Native Plant Society of the United States
Northeast Oregon Ecosystems
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Ocean Conservation Research
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Predator Defense
Prince George's County Audubon Society
Project Coyote
Project Eleven Hundred
Public Lands Project
Raptors Are The Solution
RESTORE: The North Woods
Salem Audubon Society

SAVE THE FROGS!
Selkirk Conservation Alliance
Sequoia ForestKeeper®
Sky Island Alliance
Social Compassion in Legislation
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
South Florida Wildlands Association
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Southwest Environmental Center/Wildlife for All
The Humane Society of the United States
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Western Watersheds Project
Western Wildlife Conservancy
Western Wildlife Outreach
Wild Horse Education
WildEarth Guardians
Wildlands Network
Wisconsin Society for Ornithology
www.All-Creatures.org
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates

September 29, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
US Senate
The Capitol, Room S-221
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
US House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-232
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
US Senate
The Capitol Room S-230
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-204
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader McCarthy:

From combating climate change and creating more equitable communities to improving infrastructure and expanding green jobs, our nation's current and expanding 138 million acres of urban and community forests and trees are an essential piece of the equation. Furthermore, with climate impacts from extreme heat and air pollution rising, cities and towns are urgently setting new goals for expansion of tree cover to protect our most vulnerable populations. The bold investments proposed in the reconciliation bills—particularly from the House Agriculture Committee—represent unprecedented recognition and support for the multitude of scientifically proven social, economic, and environmental benefits provided by forests and trees across communities of all sizes.

The House Agriculture Committee's \$40 billion forestry package includes support for shared priorities across the diverse spectrum of urban and community forestry stakeholders, including significant investments in USDA Forest Service programs like:

- Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF)
- Community Forests and Open Space Conservation (CFP)
- Forest and Rangeland Research, including Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)
- Forest Health Monitoring
- Forest Legacy
- Civilian Climate Corps (CCC) (new)

It is critical that the \$40 billion slated for forest restoration and wildfire resilience in the reconciliation package is maintained. This critical funding will allow our organizations to leverage the funding and resources we need to partner with state agencies, local communities, and non-governmental organizations to help create thousands of jobs, restore millions of acres of forest, reduce wildfire risk, rebuild vital infrastructure critical to economic recovery, and deliver assistance to urban areas benefiting diverse and often underserved communities.

Increasing the federal contribution of matching criteria for these funds would enhance the ability of U&CF and CCC to provide technical, financial, educational, and research services to communities so they can

plant, protect, and maintain community trees and forests, and utilize wood from these trees, to maximize environmental, social, and economic benefits.

The groups signed below, many of which are members of the [Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition](#), represent the multi-billion-dollar tree-care industry, state forestry professionals, a wide variety of professional associations including arborists, city planners and public works professionals, and forest, conservation, and water non-profit organizations that understand the value and return on investment of planting and maintaining trees where people live.

Signed:

National Organizations

American Forests

American Society of Consulting Arborists

American Society of Landscape Architects

Alliance for Community Trees

Arbor Day Foundation

City Parks Alliance

Green Infrastructure Center Inc.

International Society of Arboriculture

National Association of Landscape Professionals

National Association of State Foresters

National Recreation and Park Association

Openlands

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute

Society of American Foresters

Society of Municipal Arborists

The Davey Tree Expert Company

The Keystone Concept

The Lands Council

The Nature Conservancy

Professional Grounds Management Society

Student Conservation Association

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Tree Care Industry Association

Urban Wood Network

Water Environment Federation

State/Regional and Local Affiliates

Alliance for Cape Fear Trees

Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley

Amigos De Los Rios

Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

Asheville GreenWorks

Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Baltimore Tree Trust

Bartram's Garden
Bay Area Urban Forests Ecosystem Council
Better Nature Solutions
Bridging The Gap, Inc.
Cacapon Institute
California ReLeaf
Casey Trees
Center for Chesapeake Communities
Central Coast Urban Forests Council
Chicago Region Trees Initiative
Circular Philadelphia
City of Norfolk Forestry Operations
Clean Air Council
East Falls Tree Tenders
Edith Family Farms
Fairmount Park Conservancy
Forest ReLeaf of Missouri
Friends of Manatawna Farm
Friends of Norfolk's Environment
Friends of Poquessing Watershed
Friends of the Urban Forest
Green Columbus
Holden Forests & Gardens
Huntington Beach Tree Society, Inc.
Inland Urban Forests Council
Los Angeles/Orange County Urban Forests Council
Maplewood Neighbors
Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association
New Jersey Tree Foundation
Norfolk Tree Commission
North Carolina Urban Forest Council
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
People's Emergency Center
Philadelphia Orchard Project
Philadelphia Parks Alliance
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
PIDC
ReLeaf Michigan, Inc.
Sacramento Tree Foundation
Sacramento Urban Forests Council
San Diego Regional Urban Forests Council
San Joaquin Valley Urban Forests Council
Savannah Tree Foundation
South of South Neighborhood Association
The Climate Reality Project: Philadelphia and Southeastern PA Chapter
The Philadelphian Green Task Force
The Woodlands Cemetery

Tree Pittsburgh
Trees Atlanta
Trees Durham
Trees Forever
Trees for Honolulu's Future
Trees Indiana
Trees Knoxville
Trees Matter
Tucson Clean & Beautiful/Trees for Tucson
UC Green Inc.
Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program
Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Woodstock Tree Board
Your Children's Trees



September 23, 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

Chairwoman Stabenow and Chairman Scott,

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) writes urging you to include enhancements to, and support for the recreation economy in the Budget Reconciliation Package — including providing additional funds for the U.S. Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Program, improving trails that serve underserved communities, funding capital maintenance projects, restoring ecological integrity, creating sustainable recreation infrastructure, expanding access, promoting tourism and more. These investments are critical to securing the future of outdoor recreation on public lands and waters.

ORR is the nation's leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations — made up of 34 national members — as well as other nonprofit organizations and business entities — serving more than 110,000 businesses. According to the most recent data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis released last year, the recreation industry generated \$788 billion in economic output, accounted for 2.1 percent of GDP and 5.2 million American jobs, and was growing faster than the economy in every indicator.

Outdoor recreation on public lands plays a key role in supporting sustainable local economies, growing jobs, creating healthy communities and so much more. Investments in trail and non-trail infrastructure, as well as factoring outdoor recreation outcomes into account during project selection and promoting tourism will help expand access and opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation for generations to come, especially in underserved urban and rural communities.

Not only will these investments expand access and support local economies, but proper infrastructure investments will also rebuild recreation assets devastated by droughts and wildfires while making these assets and the public lands that house them more resilient to the ongoing effects of climate change. They will also help restore ecological integrity and conditions for at-risk species.

Once again, we urge you to include these important provisions in the upcoming Reconciliation Package. ORR and the outdoor recreation industry look forward to working with you and your committees on these important issues.

Sincerely,

American Mountain Guides Association
American Sportfishing Association
American Trails
Archery Trade Association
CHM Government Services
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Motorcycle Industry Council
National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds

National Forest Recreation Association
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National RV Dealers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Outdoor Industry Association
Professional TrailBuilders Association
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
RV Industry Association
Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
Specialty Equipment and Market Association
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
The Corps Network



September 17, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Broad Support for Water and Environmental Infrastructure to Increase Water Security

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leaders McCarthy and McConnell:

Thank you for all your work to advance bipartisan infrastructure legislation that makes significant investments in water and environmental infrastructure critical to increasing water security for water users and the ecosystems across the West.

Nearly two-thirds of the West is currently experiencing extreme or exceptional drought conditions. More than 2.2 million acres have burned in 104 large fires and complexes in 12 Western states. With this crisis as the backdrop, Trout Unlimited, Environmental Defense Fund, The Freshwater Trust, Irrigation Association, and the Steering Committee representing over 220 Western urban, agricultural and water organizations support prompt enactment of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. We further urge Congress to include resources for additional water, forestry, and ecosystem restoration programs as it considers another package of investments using the reconciliation process.

The Western Water Infrastructure Coalition includes over 220 organizations from 15 states that collectively represent \$120 billion in agricultural production—nearly one-third of all agricultural production in the country—and many of the local and regional public water agencies that supply water to more than 75 million urban, suburban and rural residents. The Steering Committee driving this effort consists of the Association of California Water Agencies, California Farm Bureau, Family Farm Alliance, National Water Resources Association and Western Growers Association

While the bipartisan infrastructure package provides significant resources, funding gaps remain in areas critical for historic drought and wildfire that currently grip the West. Additional resources are necessary

to improve the long-term management and resilience of water resources and the natural environment amongst changing climate and hydrologic conditions.

We support additional funding for the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of the Interior (DOI) to accelerate the pace and scale of restoration that improves ecosystem resiliency, reduces the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, deploys water technology, boosts conservation programs, and responds to the ongoing drought emergency.

Double USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service Program Funding

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) promotes a variety of practices that can aid in drought protection of agricultural operations. The need for doubling funding for farm bill authorized conservation programs and program delivery through the budget reconciliation effort is vivid in landscapes across the country: nearly two-thirds of the western United States is currently experiencing extreme or exceptional drought; other regions of the country are experiencing significant flooding; and, more than 2 million acres have burned in 104 large fires and complexes in 12 states so far this year.

We call attention to three programs in particular that are important for responding to unprecedented drought in the West:

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (P.L. 566) - This funding will be used to build on the current program, which works through local government sponsors and assists participants in solving natural resource and related economic problems on a watershed basis. Across the Western U.S., agriculture relies on century old irrigation infrastructure to deliver water to farms and ranches. Open canals lose extensive amounts of water through seepage and evaporation, have mounting operation and maintenance costs, limit water availability for fish and aquatic species, and create public safety risks due to breaching. Changing climatic conditions and recent droughts are further testing this aging infrastructure creating serious water shortages this year across the West. P.L. 566 funds projects like irrigation modernization, flood prevention and damage reduction, development of rural water supply sources, erosion and sediment control, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, wetland creation and restoration, and recreational opportunities.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural and non-industrial forest managers seeking to implement voluntary on-farm conservation measures. In the West, EQIP is particularly important for drought preparation. For the first time, the 2018 Farm Bill provides the authority for EQIP to invest in water delivery systems, providing the opportunity to deliver water more efficiently and reliably while mitigating the stress on aquatic systems during drought through conserved water. EQIP's broad array of eligible conservation practices can help deliver a variety of benefits to farmers, foresters, ranchers, and the environment including, but not limited to, improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, improved wildlife habitat, and mitigation strategies against drought and weather volatility. Additional funding under EQIP

should be allocated to those regions experiencing drought and practices should focus on assistance for drought mitigation.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) - RCPP promotes collaborative and coordinated conservation activities between producers and partners at a scale larger than a single farm or ranch. Like EQIP, RCPP has the potential to provide support for drought preparedness and resilience, particularly with its 2018 Farm Bill provision allowing grant agreements to promote conservation innovation and basin-scale action. Through partner agreements, the RCPP can assist with drought mitigation in drought impacted states through unique combinations of NRCS conservation practices and complementary partner strategies. We support a substantial increase in funding to RCPP as a way for partners to help deliver conservation practices and investments in drought resilience at scale

USDA Forest Service - Forest Restoration - \$30 billion

Western forests provide multiple benefits ranging from clean water and wildlife habitat, to recreational opportunities and rural jobs. Unfortunately, many of these forest are no longer representative of their historic fire regimes and the resulting uncharacteristic wildfires are impacting all of these values. The short and long-term impacts to management and sustainability of water supplies are especially troubling. The current, disastrous drought coupled with damage from severe wildfires like California's Dixie Fire and Oregon's Bootleg Fire underscore the importance of accelerating restoration actions that reduce hazardous fuels on the landscape and improve overall forest and watershed health. These investments also directly benefit watersheds our communities and environment depend upon.

Given the restoration backlog and magnitude of need, it is imperative that the Forest Service is provided with the financial resources they need to reduce exposure in high-risk areas and maintain these treatments over time. While the funding included in the bipartisan package is much appreciated, former U.S. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen has testified that \$20 billion is needed to restore and reduce fire risk on USFS lands, and Senator Bennet's [Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act](#) authorizes \$40 billion in supplemental funding for federal agencies to carryout projects that enhance forest and watershed health. As such, we encourage \$30 billion in funding for the Forest Service to make transformative investments in our Western forests, with those monies focused on the following programs:

Hazardous Fuels Reduction - This provides funding for treatment of hazardous fuels utilizing a variety of tools including prescribed fire, mechanical vegetation treatment and targeted grazing on rangelands. Significantly scaling up ecologically sound treatments on the landscape, while prioritizing the highest risk areas, can reduce wildfire intensity therefore reducing risk to communities and valuable infrastructure while also safeguarding fish and wildlife habitat and our water resources.

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration - The Collaborative Landscape Restoration Program supports collaborative, multi-year restoration projects on national forest system lands targeted at achieving a range of benefits, including wildfire risk reduction. These projects bring together local governments, timber and utility stakeholders, and conservation groups. Because of this collaborative nature, it has a proven track record in improving ecosystem health, safely restoring fire to fire adapted ecosystems, mitigating wildfire risk, and supporting rural economies.

Watershed Condition Framework and Water Source Protection Program – These two programs were established in the 2018 Farm Bill to carry out watershed protection and restoration projects on National Forest System lands. These programs are designed to foster collaboration and provide multiple benefits for the public and watershed health.

Collaborative-based, Aquatic-focused, Landscape-scale Aquatic Restoration Program – Included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a new program that will increase watershed resiliency and water quality on both federal and non-federal forest lands. Of the 15,078 watersheds on National Forest System lands, the Forest Service’s Watershed Condition Framework classifies approximately 44% are functioning at risk and 3% have impaired function. This new program will help to increase the resiliency of watersheds to withstand and recover from fires.

Stewardship Contracts - Public funds can pay for the cost of some of the needs but much more needs to be done to find revenue sources from forest management. Stewardship contracts are an important tool to increase the capacity to undertake forest treatments through partnerships and accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration. This tool provides a way to sustainably harvest wood products while also financing thinning, road obliteration, riparian restoration, and stream restoration work. Stewardship contracting is a tool available on public lands that allows timber revenue from an ecosystem restoration site to be returned to that site to cover the total bill for the project. Several successful pilot projects have been implemented over the last couple of decades, but the time is right to scale up the use of this and complementary tools to accomplish fuel treatment and restoration goals. This scaling up will also create jobs and stimulate forest products businesses in rural communities.

State and Private Forestry

- Good Neighbor Authority – The Good Neighbor Authority allows the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to enter into agreements with state forestry agencies, counties, and Tribes to complete management work on their behalf. Congress expanded GNA authorities for forest management projects in 2008 and the number of projects and participating states continues to grow.
- Landscape Scale Restoration - A competitive grant program that promotes collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes and priorities identified in State Forest Action plans. With wildfire risk reduction as one of the program objectives, projects are developed in partnership with diverse stakeholders, leverage local expertise and contribute to healthier, more resilient landscapes.

Vegetation and Watershed Management - This program incorporates a variety of restoration-related management functions that contribute to forest and watershed health both before and after wildfire. These include, but are not limited to, improving fish and wildlife habitat, planting, forest thinning and reforestation. This program is particularly important for post-fire recovery as it can include strategies to restore water and soil resources, preventing post-fire sedimentation of water infrastructure systems while also improving forest ecosystem function and habitat.

Forest Products – One of the major hurdles to increasing the number of forest acres treated is cost. Pairing adequate funding for forest products with hazardous fuels reduction and ecosystem restoration would help create healthy, resilient landscapes while promoting safer communities and rural job creation. Tools like stewardship contracting reinvest the value of forest products back into the land to

help achieve additional forest management and restoration goals, while also supporting economic development needs in rural, forested regions.

DOI Water Technology Deployment Programs- \$170 million

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and United States Geological Survey (USGS) have several technology programs that allow for better water management and decision making. The coalition encourages you to include \$170 million for water technology deployment, directed at the programs detailed below.

Reclamation Airborne Snow Observatory (ASO) Program –The ASO program allows for a more accurate understanding of the snowpack and expected runoff of a region. Having more accurate projections of runoff allows water managers to make better decisions and maximize storage at existing reservoirs. This funding would enable additional ASO flights, data analysis and accelerated deployment of program including computing infrastructure.

Reclamation Brine Management - This amount would fund the new authority provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 for Reclamation to undertake a program related to desalination brine management, which ultimately will aid deployment of desalination facilities.

USGS Mapping - Land subsidence is creating significant water management challenges for both flood control and water supply. In partnership with NASA, USGS can map land subsidence using satellite data and this funding would provide for the computing infrastructure and other resources needed for development of a land subsidence map and monitoring program. We also support continued participation by USGS in the OpenET Program.

USGS Streamflow Gauges and Forecasting - Future conditions may not reflect the past. Without accurate data, planning decisions regarding reservoir storage and releases are more imprecise and inefficient, reducing the ability to readily adapt to extreme weather events and shifts in climate. Accurate precipitation forecasting needs to extend beyond the current 10-to-14-day limitation. In addition to maintaining the critical USGS stream gauge network, this funding would:

- Fund advancements in weather and water supply forecasting, such as at the Colorado River Basin Forecasting Center;
- Fund subseasonal-to-seasonal (S2S) forecasting research and modeling; and,
- Advance collaborations with NASA Western Water Applications Office to prioritize and advance improvements to water supply forecasting, monitoring and consumptive water use accounting and forecasting.

Emergency Drought Response - \$1.5 Billion

The drought impacting the Western United States is worsening by the day, and the probability of another dry hydrologic cycle this coming winter makes the situation even more alarming. Ag, urban and environmental water and hydropower users need federal assistance to survive these extreme conditions. To the extent national emergencies will be addressed in any reconciliation package, the

coalition urges Congress to provide at least \$1.5 billion for emergency drought response activities. Some of the key impacts and programs that should be addressed include:

Emergency relief for dry ground water wells – many regions are experiencing significant numbers of wells running dry. The Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act, various USDA relief programs and other authorities can be used to facilitate assistance.

Voluntary, temporary, compensated water use reductions – Reclamation can assist Western water users impacted by water shortages due to drought through voluntary, temporary, and compensated water use reductions to allow for precious water supplies to be conserved for use on high value crops and other high priority applications. Through established water banking programs, drought response agencies, and other mechanisms allowed under state water laws and contractual arrangements, Reclamation can utilize federal funds to help alleviate pressures on agricultural users impacted by drought and climate change.

Emergency Environmental Response– The Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act provides the Bureau with the authority to make payments for securing and delivering flows for fisheries on an emergency basis during severe drought. This is another tool for responding to severe drought conditions, in addition to the voluntary, temporary, compensated water use reductions described above that can have co-benefits of increasing flows for fisheries in delivering water downstream or reducing diversions in stream and river reaches with flows low enough to endanger already-imperiled fish populations.

Emergency relief for temporarily-high power costs– reduced water levels at reservoirs and the resulting reduction in power generation is threatening farms, businesses and homes with massive increases in power costs at a time they are already being hurt by drought and pandemic related market disruptions. Excessively high replacement power rates are also contributing to expected dramatic rate increases. Funding to mitigate the impact of drought by assisting with purchase power or offsetting non-power costs traditionally covered by hydropower customers is needed to prevent significant harm to communities, producers, and businesses.

Focus and Speed of Fund Deployment

Communities must implement resiliency projects at a much-increased scale and speed to keep pace with climate-change induced challenges. In addition to increasing funds for these critical priorities, we urge that funds be deployed with a focus on achieving durable and quantified watershed resilience outcomes. Necessary watershed resilience can be achieved by working across federal funding silos and ensuring that projects are coordinated and combined to achieve the greatest benefit for the least cost. For example, upland forestry treatments can be combined with valley-bottom stream and floodplain restoration in the same area to reduce the costs of equipment and work-crew mobilization and deployment, along with integrated environmental review to speed the project design and permitting phases. In addition, environmental benefits quantification can ensure that the most effective actions are funded.

Conclusion

The undersigned are committed to working together to address the impact of changing climatic and hydrologic conditions on Western communities and its watersheds. Disadvantaged communities in the West have been especially impacted by changing weather conditions and have been ravaged by the twin horrors of drought and wildfire. A vigorous water and environmental investment portfolio with multiple aspects- as we suggest above- would go a long way toward helping the short and long-term stability of these communities.

In the short-term, well-paying jobs would materialize often resulting in immediate benefits. Over the long-term, the types of projects we have described above can lead to stabilizing a community with benefits spread out to all of its inhabitants as well as the natural environment in which they live.

We urge you to support funding for these programs, which will assist in addressing critical safety needs, develop new infrastructure, invest in smart water technology and conservation, and improve forest and water ecosystems. Importantly, it will spur economic recovery and prepare us to meet the water needs of the next generation in the face of a changing climate.

We need your help to ensure that federal investment and timely improvements are made to our water management portfolio. We look forward to working with you to address our economy's diverse water infrastructure needs.

Sincerely,

Association of California Water Agencies

California Farm Bureau

Environmental Defense Fund

Family Farm Alliance

Irrigation Association

National Water Resources Association

The Freshwater Trust

Trout Unlimited

Western Growers

September 9, 2021



The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Thompson:

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) and the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention (SFLR) Network strongly support the House Committee on Agriculture's inclusion of significant funding for the Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) program, wildfire mitigation on private lands, and research and inventory tools in the upcoming Reconciliation bill. This Reconciliation bill presents an historic opportunity to focus federal investments on climate mitigation and forest restoration and resilience objectives, especially those that help leverage private sector resources and markets. Putting resources toward proven programs that can reduce wildfire and sequester carbon, and that do not require extensive new rulemaking, will yield the fastest results.

The American Forest Foundation is a national conservation organization that empowers family forest owners to make a meaningful conservation impact around wildfire resilience, wildlife habitat, clean water, carbon sequestration and storage, and sustainable wood supplies. Most of America's forests are privately owned, and of these, 95 percent of them are owned by families and individuals. In total, that is nearly 290 million acres of forestland, owned by 21 million family forest owners.

Our forests are a critical element in our national toolbox to achieve potential solutions for climate change, carbon sequestration, wildfire resilience, public health, and economic challenges. One in four rural Americans owns forestland, most located in communities hardest hit by Covid-19 and recent economic distress.

Healthy private forests contribute a significant number of public benefits, including clean air and water, enhanced wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities, watershed protection, timber production, and economic support to rural communities. As you draft the Reconciliation bill to reflect current carbon market opportunities, we urge the Committee to include language that allows LSR, science, and inventory funds to be used to support private

markets, especially small and historically-underserved landowner participation in carbon markets.

The Reconciliation bill also presents the Committee with numerous opportunities for long-term investments in other critical forestry areas. With wildfires causing more and more devastation as climate change accelerates, there is a significant need for increased hazardous fuels reduction, on both public and private lands in the American West. These investments protect people, communities, and critical infrastructure, and ensure that forests can remain net carbon sinks and not sources.

Additionally, increasing the Forest Service's capacity for its Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) and for climate science, especially with respect to specific forest practices, will help unlock carbon market opportunities and undoubtedly mean a greater understanding of the issues that will impact our forests in the coming decades and lead to policies that at once maximize forest potential and the efficiency of federal spending.

Finally, AFF and SFLR are particularly concerned that the House provides specific access and funding opportunities for climate mitigation or forest resilience activities for our small and historically-underserved private forest landowners. In addition to expanded participation in USDA's forest restoration programs, we also encourage the Committee to provide expanded opportunities for small and underserved forest owners within the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Between 1910 and 2017, African American landowners have seen an 85% decline in land ownership, from 16 million acres down to only 2.4 million.

The estimated \$14 billion asset represented by the remaining African American-owned rural land is an important existing source of rural wealth and should be preserved, as should the ownerships of other underserved and minority landowners. We recommend the Committee consider various options to address this issue, including potential pilot programs, partial/waiver of LSR matching requirements for small and underserved forest owners, and other options which would facilitate expanded participation of these landowners in U.S. Forest Service programs.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We look forward to working with you as you continue to develop this legislation.

Sincerely,

American Forest Foundation

Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention (SFLR) Network



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

NEWS RELEASE

www.awc.org | [@woodcouncil](https://twitter.com/woodcouncil)

Sept. XX, 2021

Read Release Online >

MEDIA CONTACT

Heather Stegner

Vice President, Communications

202-463-4756, hstegner@awc.org

AWC Supports House Ag Reconciliation Recommendations Significant Investment in Forest Products Sector

WASHINGTON – [American Wood Council](http://www.awc.org) (AWC) President and CEO Jackson Morrill issued the following statement following the House Agriculture Committee’s draft legislation recommendations for the reconciliation package. The proposed program allocations include \$1 billion to provide grants under the wood innovation grant program, \$100 million for the forest inventory and analysis (FIA), and \$50 million for the research mission area of the Forest Service to carry out greenhouse gas life cycle analyses of domestic wood products.

“Working forests and the wood products they produce can significantly reduce the carbon footprint in the United States, providing a readily-available, renewable and resilient building material for a carbon-smart built environment.

“The House Agriculture’s recommendations recognize the importance of properly accounting for the carbon in our nation’s working forests in order to fully realize the critical role wood products have in achieving carbon reductions in the built environment. Funding the Wood Innovation Grant program will continue to support the scale of wood and mass timber, such as past projects like innovative mass timber affordable housing developments. AWC thanks the Committee and strongly encourages its recommendations to be included in the final reconciliation package.”

###

The **American Wood Council (AWC)** is the voice of North American wood products manufacturing, an industry that provides over 450,000 men and women in the United States with family-wage jobs. AWC represents 86 percent of the structural wood products industry, and members make products that are essential to everyday life from a renewable resource that absorbs and sequesters carbon. Staff experts

develop state-of-the-art engineering data, technology, and standards for wood products to assure their safe and efficient design, as well as provide information on wood design, green building, and environmental regulations. AWC also advocates for balanced government policies that affect wood products.

www.awc.org | [@woodcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/woodcouncil)



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

September 24, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

CC: The Honorable Patrick Leahy; The Honorable Sherrod Brown; The Honorable Amy Klobuchar; The Honorable Michael Bennet; The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand; The Honorable Tina Smith; The Honorable Richard Durbin; The Honorable Cory Booker; The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan; The Honorable Raphael Warnock

Re: Senate Agriculture Committee Support for House Agriculture Forestry Title in S.Con.Res.5

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow:

The American Wood Council (AWC) writes in support of the House Agriculture Committee's Agriculture Forestry Title in S.Con.Res.5. and encourages the continued prioritization of these programs and funding levels. We appreciate that the Senate Agriculture Committee recognizes that working forests maximize the ability to sequester and store carbon, improve forest health and resilience, sustain important ecosystem benefits, and ultimately provide markets for renewable and sustainable building materials that store carbon in the built environment. The funding provided in this Section will make important strides in advancing the necessary research for carbon accounting in the built environment and accelerating the broader adoption of innovative mass timber public/private projects across the country.

AWC is the voice of North American wood products manufacturing, an industry that provides over 450,000 men and women in the United States with family-wage jobs. AWC represents 86 percent of the structural wood products industry, and our members make products that are essential to everyday life from a renewable resource that absorbs and sequesters carbon. Staff experts develop state-of-the-art engineering data, technology, and standards for wood products to assure their safe and efficient design, as well as provide information on wood design, green building, and environmental regulations. AWC also advocates for balanced government policies that affect wood products.

The built environment presents a significant opportunity as a carbon sink. Increasing the use of wood products, which sequester carbon for the life of a building, reduces the overall greenhouse gas impacts of new construction, supports rural economies, and fosters the growth of a nascent mass timber manufacturing sector. Below, we have highlighted the key areas of Title I that we encourage the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee to adopt and why investment remains necessary:

Wood Innovations Grants support traditional wood utilization projects, expand wood energy markets, and promote using wood as a construction material in commercial buildings. Wood

222 Catocin Circle, Suite 201, Leesburg, VA 20175
1101 K Street, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005
202-463-2766 · www.awc.org

Innovation Grants have, for example, recently helped to kick-start trailblazing tall mass timber construction projects, such as the recently completed tall mass timber arena at the University of Idaho. The unprecedented funding that is recommended to support the Wood Innovation Grant program would be at a scale that could truly drive innovative mass timber construction mainstream, securing important carbon emissions reductions in the built environment.

The **Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA)** provides critical data to measure and assess carbon in working forests. As more attention has been placed on the important role that working forests and nature-based solutions can play in reducing our country's carbon footprint, the data collected by FIA has become even more critical to ensuring it is properly accounted for, from the forest to the built environment. The proposed \$100,000,000 in funding will be vital to ensure the program provides accurate and complete data that the Government and marketplace can confidently rely on to determine the climate benefits of working forests and wood products.

Similarly, the \$50,000,000 for the Forest Service is essential to carry out greenhouse gas **life cycle analyses** of domestic wood products to refine and standardize methodologies to accurately measure and disclose the embodied carbon in wood products. This information in turn would inform how wood products are considered in whole building lifecycle analyses that compare across building materials to identify the lowest GHG emitting alternatives. Increased adoption and utilization of whole building lifecycle assessment tools across the public and private sector will reduce the GHG impacts of buildings by valuing all low-embodied carbon building materials, including wood products that store carbon.

While we understand there are ongoing discussions about the overall package, we implore the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee to support these critical forestry provisions at their current funding levels. In doing so, this will provide long-term, positive economic and environmental impacts to communities across the United States. We appreciate your consideration of this matter and look forward to working with you further on this issue.

Sincerely,



Jackson Morrill
President & CEO
American Wood Council

Sustainable Missoula: Time for Code Red on climate action in Montana

BY CLIMATE SMART MISSOULA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AUGUST 13, 2021

Like no other, this summer is bringing the impacts of our climate emergency into focus. Climate is in the news, and it will be for the rest of our lives.

Exhibit A — a few headlines about our hot and smoky weather:

- *Summer of disaster: extreme weather wreaks havoc worldwide as climate change bears down* ([LA Times](#)),
- *The West is burning. Climate change is making it worse* ([Vox](#)),
- *UM research: 2020 was the worst fire season in 2,000 years; expected to get worse* ([Daily Montanan](#)).

Exhibit B — headlines from the August 9 IPCC Report:

- Climate Change: IPCC report is ‘code red for humanity’ ([BBC](#))
- The new UN climate change report shows there’s no time for denial or delay ([Science News](#))
- Climate report: Hope is not lost, but ‘we need to move faster’ ([Christian Science Monitor](#))
- A Major Report Warns Climate Change Is Accelerating And Humans Must Cut Emissions Now ([NPR](#))

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) just released the first report of the Sixth Assessment, which addresses the most up-to-date physical understanding of the climate system and climate change. The findings are stark and urgent, as the 234 authors state: “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land.” We urge you to take some time to read more about this latest report (or the [report itself](#)) and then resolve to take action.

As members of Climate Smart Missoula’s Board of Directors, we consider daily how to move the most salient and timely climate solutions forward,

with the urgency required to meet the moment. And we believe this IPCC report can and must spur renewed commitment to act without delay.

At last month's [City Club](#), Missoula County Sustainability and Climate Smart Missoula gave an excellent presentation about how we can and must address the climate crisis in two ways: Manage for the unavoidable and avoid the unmanageable.

This summer amidst record heat, drought and wildfires, as individuals and a community, we are immersed in efforts to manage the unavoidable: trying to adapt and protect human health and that of our critical and iconic ecosystems. From bringing clean indoor air to those most vulnerable, to protecting cold water fisheries, or simply watering parched trees – there's much to do.

But we also must avoid the unmanageable, by immediately and significantly cutting climate-heating emissions. This much is clear from the latest IPCC report: we must stop burning fossil fuels. And while global and national action is needed, local efforts are also crucial and can spark further action.

We strongly support federal efforts presently being debated. The Senate just passed a bipartisan infrastructure deal that, while not a climate-focused bill, does include climate resiliency funds. Water and forest management projects are included, as well as support for transit and passenger rail, although we'd like to see these funds increased.

We thank Senator Tester for his work on this infrastructure bill and for his vote to bring the budget reconciliation bill forward, the second key piece of legislation. It's in this "budget reconciliation" package that significant climate-focused efforts must be offered, including a clean electricity standard, incentives for renewable energy, energy efficiency in buildings, and much more.

We call on our congressional delegation to support these efforts to quickly slash greenhouse gas emissions. This summer's wildfire smoke is clear evidence that if we do not, we jeopardize our health, our Montana tourism economy, our environment, and our amazing quality of life.

We also call on Governor Gianforte to move forward with Montana's Climate Solutions Plan, bringing community and climate leaders together to capitalize on the tremendous opportunities brought by the clean energy transition.

Last but not least, as Missoulians, we ask our local government to strengthen their commitment to a healthy, stable climate by prioritizing climate as a lens through which decisions are made in all departments, and by increasing funding in next year's budget.

As a community, we need capacity to work directly on reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, implementing the *Climate Ready Missoula* plan, and strengthening collaborative work statewide. Missoula can be an even stronger climate leader, inspiring innovative actions here and beyond our boundaries.

Many of the programs that Climate Smart staff work on day in and day out can simultaneously drive down our carbon emissions and strengthen community health, equity, and resiliency, collaborative efforts like our [Footprint Fund](#), [Building\(s\) for the Future](#) initiative, and [Wildfire Smoke Ready](#) efforts.

Each of us works to drive innovation and sustainability in the work we do, whether that is at a large health system, planning and design firm, credit union, river conservation nonprofit, University of Montana, or via supporting initiatives for communities that have been historically excluded.

We are ready to roll up our sleeves to accelerate collaborative work with community partners. We look forward to joining with city and county leaders, businesses, organizations, volunteers, and citizens to turn down the heat – toward a safer, more just and humane climate.

Let's not turn away from difficult news and dire projections. Instead let's ALL rise to the urgency of today and take action.

Climate Smart Missoula's Board of Directors: Beth Schenk is the Executive Director of Environmental Stewardship for Providence Health; Chris Brick is a retired scientist and active community member; Gwen Lankford is the President/Owner of Sapphire Strategies; Karen Knudsen

is Executive Director of the Clark Fork Coalition; Melissa Matassa-Stone is principal Engineer and Co-CEO at WGM Group; Paul Herendeen is Director of Impact Market Development at Clearwater Credit Union; and Peter McDonough is the program coordinator for the Climate Change Studies program at UM.

This Sustainable Missoula column is brought to you – via the Missoula Current – every week by [Climate Smart Missoula](#) and [Home ReSource](#).

September 15, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
328A Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
328A Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

On behalf of our research organizations, we respectfully request that a portion of existing or additional Forest Service wildfire funding be utilized for the Forest Service/Fire and Smoke Model Evaluation Experiment (FASMEE). This will address the increased need to improve fire behavior and smoke models to confront the wildfire threat facing America's forests and rangelands.

As you know, FASMEE is a multi-region fire campaign involving several universities and R&D under leadership of the US Forest Service. An increase of \$9.295 million that we are requesting for the US Forest Service will provide wildland fire management agencies improved tools to understand wildfire behavior, mitigate impacts of smoke on public and first responder health, and predict and manage fire effects on ecosystem health. We believe that appropriated funds for fuels management or funds within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, such as for the Joint Fire Science Program, would be appropriate funding sources for FASMEE.

Between our organizations, we have a unique perspective on how to use prescribed fire science to solve land management problems. We work cooperatively and with our partners at the U.S. Forest Service Research & Development to conduct research on wildland fire and prescribed burns to apply these findings across the country. Our team assembled for FASMEE represents an unprecedented collection of scientists working on fuels characterization, fire behavior measurements, plume and smoke measurements, and fire effects consequences. Our work thus far has concentrated on the quaking aspen forests of the Fishlake National Forest in Utah, where Region 4 and the Fishlake NF have been leading in application of prescribed fire for a multitude of benefits and working closely with researchers to get their questions answered. Our next efforts will be in the Southeast at Ft. Stewart (GA) and Eglin Air Force Base (FL), with additional planned experiments in western national forests.

FASMEE has been a national model for fire research, integrating scientists across federal research and development, universities, non-governmental organizations, and fire management agencies. FASMEE is a major effort focused on integrated fuels, fire behavior, smoke, and ecology measurements. Past support from the Joint Fire Science Program and the Forest Service offers rare opportunities to study large fires in comprehensive ways. The collaborations among scientists established by FASMEE can be leveraged moving forward to investigate prescribed fires and wildfires across other fire-prone regions in the US.

Wildfire seasons are becoming increasingly destructive, demonstrating the urgent need for wildland fire research. Increased funding for FASMEE will help increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire and managed wildfire work with the U.S. Forest Service as well as other federal land management agencies. Together, we can manage the threat wildfires pose to Americans' health, safety and wellbeing. FASMEE is one commonsense part of the solution that we feel confident can move us in that direction.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bill Palmer
President and CEO
Tall Timbers

Dr. Timothy Brown
Director of Western Regional Climate Center
Professor
Desert Research Institute

Dr. Daniel G. Brown
Director and Professor
School of Environmental and Forest Sciences
College of the Environment
University of Washington

Dr. Christopher Nomura
Vice President, Research and Development
University of Idaho

Dr. David D. Reed
Vice President for Research
Michigan Technological University

Dr. Mary A. Papazian
President
San Jose State University



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WATER CONGRESS
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The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Thompson-

I write today on behalf of the Colorado Water Congress (CWC) to ask you to retain funding for USDA programs as congress continues debating the reconciliation package and infrastructure legislation.

The CWC is a bi-partisan membership organization consisting of over 400 members, serving as the principal voice of Colorado's water community. CWC's membership reflects all sectors and aspects of Colorado water users. Access to a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of water is of critical importance to agricultural as well as our nation's entire economy and the environment.

The forested lands of the United States play a vital role in the water supply that much of our nation depends on. Healthy forests provide a myriad of watershed, ecosystem, and recreation benefits. In a healthy forest ecosystem wildfire can be a natural, regenerative force. Unfortunately, throughout much of the U.S., our forests are not healthy and the fires burning through them are catastrophic. They are catastrophic to the environment, destroying tens of thousands of acres of habitat and have a global impact releasing millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. They are catastrophic to the economy, causing billions of dollars in damages and wiping out entire communities. They also pose a catastrophic threat to local government and efforts to supply clean water.

Forests and watersheds are the natural infrastructure sustaining Colorado's economy. While climate change continues to drive catastrophic wildfires and prolonged drought, Congress has not directed necessary funding to address the problems. As a result, state and local governments are often left to foot the bill for conservation, restoration, and wildfire mitigation. Upgrading our natural infrastructure is an opportunity to build climate resilience and create or sustain millions of good-paying jobs.

The Senate and House Agriculture Committees have an excellent opportunity to advance the health of our nation's forests, protect communities, ecosystems and watersheds in the reconciliation and infrastructure bill efforts. We ask you to ensure that critical USDA funding in this legislation is not reduced.

Thank you for considering our request. We appreciate your leadership on the many issues facing our nation's agricultural producers.

Sincerely, _____

Douglas Kemper
Executive Director

Andy Colosimo
Federal Affairs Committee Chair



The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Thompson;

I write today on behalf of the Kansas Water Congress to ask you to retain funding for USDA programs as congress continues debating the reconciliation package and infrastructure legislation.

We are a Kansas association of water related trade associations and local government that include bankers, agribusiness, livestock, irrigators, grain and feed, aggregate producers, builders, municipalities, private business, groundwater management districts, and others who want good state and federal water policy for a strong future Kansas and the United States. Access to a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of water is of critical importance to agricultural as well as our nation's entire economy and the environment.

The forested and grass lands of the United States play a vital role in the water supply that much of our nation depends on. Unfortunately, throughout much of the U.S., our forests are not healthy and the fires burning through them are catastrophic to the environment and to the economy, causing billions of dollars in damages and wiping out entire communities. They also pose a catastrophic threat to local government and efforts to supply clean water.

The Senate and House Agriculture Committees have an excellent opportunity to advance the health of our nation's forests and grasslands, protect communities, ecosystems and watersheds in the reconciliation and infrastructure bill efforts. We ask you to ensure that critical USDA funding in this legislation is not reduced.

Thank you for considering our request. We appreciate your leadership on the many issues facing our nation's agricultural producers and water managers.

Sincerely,

Dave A. Brenn, President
Kansas Water Congress

620-287-4541

212 SW 8th Ave., Ste. 201, Topeka, KS 66603

PRESIDENT
TOM DAVIS
Yuma County Water Users' Association
Yuma, Arizona

VICE-PRESIDENT
DONOVAN NEESE
Roosevelt Irrigation District
Buckeye, Arizona

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Mesa, Arizona

Executive Assistant
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Mesa, Arizona



AGRIBUSINESS & WATER COUNCIL OF ARIZONA

4455 East Broadway Road, Suite 102
Mesa, Arizona 85206
(480) 558-5301 ♦ Fax (480) 558-4170
info@agribusinessarizona.org

Arizona's Representative to the National Water Resources Association

September 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman,
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Thompson:

I write today on behalf of the Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona (ABWC) to strongly urge the retention of funding for USDA programs as congress continues debating the reconciliation package and infrastructure legislation. Many organizations out west, including our own, have sought funding for years for USDA programs and we see a real opportunity to realize that request this Congress.

Our organization is a non-profit association focusing on irrigated agriculture, including all efforts to promote healthy watersheds through proper forest management. Access to a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of water is of critical importance to agriculture as well as our nation's entire economy and the environment, especially during this long, extended drought in Arizona and other western states.

Forest conditions need a great deal of attention to protect our water supply, ecosystems, recreation and other economic and environmental benefits. Devasting fires are a regular occurrence which benefit nothing. Now is not the time to cut such watershed and wildfire funding during the reconciliation debate. The West needs as much if not more attention than eastern concerns where water supply is not as critical an issue.

The Senate and House Agriculture Committees have an excellent opportunity to advance the health of our nation's forests, protect communities, ecosystems and watersheds in the reconciliation and infrastructure bill discussions.

Thank you for considering our request. We appreciate your leadership on the many issues facing our nation's agricultural producers and water managers.

Sincerely,

Chris Udall
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Past President
N.W. "BILL" PLUMMER
Water Resources Consultant
Scottsdale, Arizona

Dr. SHANE BURGESS
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ

MARK CLARK
Chairman
Mohave County Water Authority/
Bullhead City, Arizona

MICHAEL CURTIS
Attorney
Phoenix, Arizona

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Replenishment Services, LLC
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Wellton, Arizona

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McMicken Irrigation District
Waddell, Arizona

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ROBERT S. LYNCH
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Phoenix, Arizona

WADE NOBLE
Attorney
Yuma, Arizona

Shane Leonard
Roosevelt Water Conservation District
Mesa, Arizona

DAVE ROBERTS
Salt River Project
Phoenix, Arizona

DR. JEFF SILVERTOOTH
Cooperative Extension, UA
Tucson, Arizona

SIDNEY SMITH
Hohokam I&DD
Coolidge, Arizona

GRANT WARD
Maricopa-Stanfield I&DD
Maricopa, Arizona

NOEL CARTER
Buckeye Water Conservation & DD
Buckeye, Arizona

MATHEW BEYER
Farm Credit West
Tempe, Arizona

PATRICK SIGL
Salt River Project
Phoenix, Arizona



Truckee-Carson Irrigation District

Newlands Project

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September 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition &
Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
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The Honorable David Scott
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U.S. House of Representative
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Thompson:

I write today on behalf of the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District in Fallon, Nevada. I respectfully ask you to retain funding for USDA programs -as Congress continues its debate regarding the reconciliation package and infrastructure legislation.

Our District is a political subdivision of the State of Nevada. We operate and maintain the Newlands Federal Reclamation Project (Project) under contract with the United States. We supply surface water through federal Project facilities to approximately 2,500 water users including local governments, the United States Navy, farmers, ranchers, tribes, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge). Our water supply comes to us from rivers having their headwaters in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. Thus the water supply for our Project begins its journey in the forests of California! Our entire region has been blanketed this year by the sickening dense gloom of smoke from massive forest fires throughout the West. So much forest has been tragically wasted. We can, we must, do better!

-1-

Clearly, access to a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of water is of critical importance to all of us in agriculture -as well as to our nation's entire economy and the environment. Forest health is inextricably connected with all we do in our community.

The forested lands of the United States play a vital role in the water supply that much of our nation depends on. Healthy forests provide a myriad of watershed, ecosystem, and recreational benefits. In a healthy forest ecosystem wildfire can be a natural, regenerative force. Unfortunately, throughout much of the U.S., our forests are not healthy and the fires burning through them are catastrophic. They are catastrophic to the environment, destroying tens of thousands of acres of habitat and have a global impact releasing millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. They are catastrophic to the economy, causing billions of dollars in damages and wiping out entire communities. They also pose a catastrophic threat to local government and efforts to supply clean water.

The Senate and House Agriculture Committees are now positioned with the opportunity to advance the health of our nation's forests, protect communities, ecosystems and watersheds in the reconciliation and infrastructure bill efforts. We implore you to ensure that critical USDA funding in this legislation is not reduced.

Thank you for considering our request. We appreciate your leadership on the many issues facing our nation's agricultural producers.

Sincerely,

TRUCKEE-CARSON IRRIGATION DISTRICT

By: 

Rusty D. Jardine, Esq.
District Manager

Cc: Board of Directors



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS

444 North Capitol Street NW | Suite 387 | Washington, DC 20001 | www.stateforesters.org

September 24, 2021

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the nation's state foresters, I would like to thank you for your recent visit to the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho, and for your engagement with George Geissler, state forester of Washington and chair of the National Association of State Forester's (NASF) Wildland Fire Committee.

Your historic visit to NIFC, the first by any president since it was established 50 years ago, clearly shows that your administration understands the true nature of wildland fire management. As you said, "wildfire knows no boundaries," and no one agency – federal, state, local, or volunteer – anywhere in the U.S. has the resources needed to respond to the growing threat of wildfires alone. Only together, in collaboration and cooperation, can we achieve effective wildfire response in this country.

NASF represents the directors of the state forestry agencies in all 50 states, eight U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. State forestry agencies contribute a significant portion of the overall wildland fire suppression effort nationally in terms of resources, personnel, capacity, and funds, including providing wildfire protection on over 1.59 billion acres nationwide.

Collectively, states spent \$1.9 billion on wildfire suppression, prevention, and mitigation in 2018, the bulk of which – \$1.4 billion – was spent on suppression operations alone. Federal agencies spent an additional \$3.1 billion on wildfire suppression in 2018. More than 8,000 state personnel (including overhead and crews) mobilized through the National Interagency Coordination Center in 2018 to fight wildfires across the U.S. Of those state personnel, 6,026 (nearly 75%), were mobilized to federal wildfires.¹ State forestry agencies also provide local governments and volunteer fire departments with access to fire and emergency response resources, which in 2018, included 93,656 firefighters, 91,940 fire engines, 2,851 dozers, and 620 aircraft. In 2020, 58,950

¹ Statistics gathered from the Interagency Fire and Aviation Management Web Applications (FAMWEB) system include data from the Situation Report and Incident Status Summary (ICS-209) programs. These statistics cited above are intended to provide a national perspective of annual fire activity.

Executive Director
Jay Farrell

2021-2022 Executive Committee

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Past President Joe Fox, Arkansas

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wildland fires burned over 10.1 million acres. State and local agencies responded to the majority – 76% – of these wildfires across all jurisdictions.²

NASF stands ready to work with you in providing the forestry and wildfire management leadership our country needs as we tackle climate change, economic uncertainty, and America's wildfire emergency.

I wanted to follow up on the conversation you had with Mr. Geissler during your visit to NIFC. Specifically, I wish to offer some insight regarding your questions about infrastructure funding and the Civilian Climate Corps.

The bipartisan "Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act" recognizes forests as integral natural infrastructure in need of significant investments. Restoring America's forests, watersheds, and rangelands – quite literally upgrading our natural infrastructure – can mitigate the effects of climate change, enhance wildfire resilience, and create and sustain millions of good-paying jobs.

The reconciliation package currently working through Congress includes critical funding for a Civilian Climate Corps (CCC). State forestry agencies can use this funding to put state Forest Action Plan implementation into overdrive, achieving accelerated forest management and wildland fire outcomes on all lands nationwide. Several states currently manage state conservation corps programs. These states are uniquely positioned to leverage CCC funding and are more than capable of rapidly training the next generation of American conservationists.

The CCC funding provided to the USDA Forest Service's State and Private Forestry programs in the reconciliation package would give state forestry agencies the resources they need to partner with local communities and non-governmental organizations to help create thousands of jobs, restore millions of acres of forest, reduce wildfire risk, and rebuild vital infrastructure critical to economic recovery. This funding would also allow state forestry agencies and partners to deliver assistance to urban areas, benefiting diverse and often underserved communities through the federal Urban and Community Forestry Program.

It is critical that the \$40 billion slated for forest restoration and wildfire resilience in the reconciliation package is maintained. The scale and severity of wildfires – and their impact on communities – far outpace current efforts to prevent human-caused wildfires and mitigate wildfire damages. Without an unprecedented and sustained investment in coordinated wildland fire and forest management, wildfires will continue to plague the nation's forests, destroy our cherished communities, and irrevocably alter American landscapes.

If the bipartisan "Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act" (HR 3684) and the "Build Back Better" reconciliation package (S. Con. Res. 14) are passed, your administration's Wildfire Resilience Interagency Working Group will play a key role in guiding their implementation. State foresters

² National Interagency Fire Center, Historical Wildland Fire Summaries. Last accessed September 24, 2021 at: https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/intelligence/2020_statsum/intro_summary20.pdf

are in a unique position to assist in the working group's development of wildfire management policies and programs that work at all levels: from the grassroots to Washington, D.C. We stand ready with you – shoulder to shoulder – to reach our shared objectives in making our forests and communities more resilient to wildfire.

Please do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher R. Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Christopher Martin
NASF President
Connecticut State Forester

CC:

White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Julie Rodriguez
Associate Director of White House Public Engagement, Will McIntee
United States Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas J. Vilsack
USDA Deputy Under Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment, Meryl Harrell
USDA Forest Service Chief, Randy Moore

September 28, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell;

I write today on behalf of the National Water Resources Association (NWRA) to encourage you to retain funding for USDA forest health programs found in the House Agriculture Committee’s forestry title as congress continues its efforts to develop the reconciliation package and infrastructure legislation. This \$40 billion in forest focused investments is critical to protecting our nation’s water supply and a powerful tool to help combat the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

The NWRA is a non-partisan, non-profit association that represents state water associations, and both agricultural and municipal water providers. Collectively NWRA members help provide water to more than 50 million people throughout the Western and Southeastern United States. Our members work to deliver water and power resources that help our nation flourish. Access to a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of water is of critical importance to the health and wellbeing of our nation’s citizens and is also vital to the health of our nation’s economy.

The forested lands of the United States play a vital role in the water supply that much of our nation depends on. Healthy forests provide a myriad of watershed, ecosystem, and recreation benefits. In a healthy forest ecosystem wildfire can be a natural, regenerative force. Unfortunately, throughout much of the U.S., our forests are not healthy and the fires burning through them are catastrophic. They are catastrophic to the environment, destroying tens of thousands of acres of habitat and have a global impact releasing millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. They are catastrophic to the economy, causing billions of dollars in damages and wiping out entire communities. They also pose a catastrophic threat to local government and efforts to supply clean water.

We appreciate the work of both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees to address forest and watershed health. Efforts to improve the conditions of our forested lands are incredibly important. Healthy, working forests maximize the ability to sequester and store carbon, maintain watershed health and sustain critical ecosystems all while benefiting the economy. In order to

protect water supply and improve forest health we ask you to ensure that vital USDA forest health funding is not reduced.

Thank you for considering our request. We appreciate your leadership on the many issues facing our nation.

Sincerely,



Ian Lyle
Executive Vice President
National Water Resources Association

CC:

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Opinion: Forests Belong In Reconciliation Bill

- Sep 30, 2021

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Vermont is experiencing, first-hand, the far-reaching impacts of climate change and the global nature crisis. Winter temperatures are rising and snowfall totals are dropping, while many species of wildlife are shifting their ranges further to the north and higher in elevation if they can, or are threatened with extinction if they cannot.

Forest conversion and fragmentation continue at a rapid pace, while our state is under pressure from both second-home development and pandemic-weary crowds looking for outdoor recreation and respite. Meanwhile, an outdoor way of life in this state relies on the precarious fate of our forests: More than 1 out of every 5 Vermonters, including over 30,000 children, lack close to home access to conserved natural areas. We are facing a need for generational investment in natural climate solutions and outdoor access for all, chief among them forest conservation, to provide a sustainable future—both ecologically and economically— for the Green Mountain State.

Congress is currently considering a substantial investment in forest conservation that would grow the economy, create jobs, and take critical action on climate change. We were glad to see that the House Agriculture Committee included \$40 billion for forestry

provisions in their reconciliation legislation. Included in that bill is a critical \$1.25 billion investment in the Forest Legacy Program, which helps states and private forest owners maintain working forest lands and is a key tool to protect natural infrastructure and climate resilience.

The Forest Legacy Program is a voluntary conservation program that is responsible for the conservation of over 2.885 million acres of working forest lands across the U.S., primarily through conservation easement purchases, with more than 50 percent of project costs leveraged from non-federal sources. Here in Vermont the program has conserved nearly 100,000 acres, leveraging \$35.4M in federal funds for a total investment of \$57.4M to protect places like Hunger Mountain Headwaters, Eden Forest, Worcester Woods, Dowsville Headwaters, Groton Forest, and Windham Region Working Forest.

The program invests in natural infrastructure by conserving forests that sequester carbon dioxide, provide important wildlife habitat, and protect our rivers, lakes and ponds as well as our drinking water supplies. The forests provide all of these benefits while producing timber and providing public recreation access, contributing significantly to Vermont's economy via multiple sectors. It's a win-win, a program that really works.

Each year, however, there are far more Forest Legacy Program applications than can possibly be funded, meaning that urgent opportunities to protect and create jobs while fighting the climate crisis are left on the table. In the Northeast Kingdom, a Forest Legacy project currently in development at Miles Mountain would conserve 12,000 acres, a massive opportunity to protect one of the last swaths of landscape-scale, unprotected forestland in Vermont. Through this project the ecologically and economically significant forestland, wetlands, and well-loved trail system of Miles Mountain and Miles Pond would be secured for future generations, including permanent public access for wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, and skiing, as well as motorized use on designated trails. But, such a large-scale project might not get funded unless Congress provides additional dollars.

With the rapid pace and scale of forest conversion, now is the time to invest in forest protection before it is too late. Senators Leahy and Sanders, as well as Representative Welch, have been consistent champions of forest conservation. We urge them to support the forestry provisions in the reconciliation bill and make clear to Congressional Leadership that these natural climate solutions should remain in the final reconciliation package.

Endorsing this commmentary are David Mears, Audubon Vermont, Heather Furman, The Nature Conservancy, Shelby Semmes, The Trust for Public Land, Nick Richardson, Vermont Land Trust and Brian Shupe, Vermont Natural Resources Council.