January 21, 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman House Appropriations Committee Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks, Chairman Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Chairman Dicks:

We, the undersigned organizations wish to express our appreciation for your leadership in restoring forest sector jobs and improving the nation's forests with investments in USDA Forest Service programs in the House Appropriations Committee's economic stimulus package.

Federal investment of \$550 million in existing USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs can put 10,000 people to work reducing the threat of wildfire on high priority acres around communities, restoring forest ecosystems on non-federal lands, improving the health of urban and community forests, and developing clean renewable wood-energy systems in rural forest-based communities.

Investing \$300 million can employ 5,400 rural Americans to help address the nation's backlog in hazardous fuels and forest health treatments on federal lands. These funds will be used to treat millions of acres of National Environmental Policy Act approved fuels reduction projects while protecting rural communities from the devastating impacts of wildfire.

Additionally, investing \$650 million in capital improvements and maintenance on US Forest Service lands will help improve roads and trails, addressing water quality and safety issues posed by the current maintenance backlog. This has the potential to put over 10,000 people to work.

Again, we greatly appreciate your support for improving the nation's public and private forests through federal investment in USDA Forest Service programs.

Sincerely,

American Forest Foundation American Forest Resource Council Association of Consulting Foresters Black Hills Forest Resource Association Colorado Timber Industry Association Council of Western State Foresters Hardwood Federation Idaho Conservation League

Intermountain Forest Association

National Association of Conservation Districts

National Association of Counties

National Association of Forest Service Retirees

National Association of State Foresters

National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition

National Wild Turkey Federation

National Woodland Owners Association

Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters

Ruffed Grouse Society

Southern Group of State Foresters

The Pacific Forest Trust