

March 19, 2012

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

The undersigned organizations collectively believe in the importance and utility of up-to-date inventory and analysis on forests in the United States. The USDA Forest Service—Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program provides critical information that enables sound policy and forest management decisions. We fully recognize the difficult decisions that come with addressing reductions to the Federal budget and ***ask your support to fund FIA at no less than current FY12 levels (i.e. \$69 million) to truly provide an accurate, up-to-date inventory of America's forests.***

The FIA Program is the nation's oldest forest census—providing invaluable information about forests and informing forest policies for over 75 years. The Program collects data on everything from species composition and forest health to forest growth rates and forest products utilization. FIA data serves as the basis for determining trends in forest ownership; assessing fish and wildlife habitat; evaluating wildfire, insect, and disease risks; predicting the spread of invasive species; selecting locations for forest products facilities; and for identifying and responding to priorities identified in the State Forest Action Plans.

The Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-85) mandated the USDA Forest Service to partner with the states and non-governmental interests to provide a nationally consistent, annual inventory program in all states, ensuring timely availability of data and developing state-level reports. The funding reductions proposed in the President's FY13 Budget Request will disrupt the inventory cycle length and significantly delay FIA's information delivery. In fact, the President proposes these reductions at a time when the program is called on to also address contemporary issues such as producing reliable, site-specific estimates of sustainable forest biomass supplies for domestic energy production and determining the timber supply available to support local mills and local jobs.

We urge Congress to support the FIA program in FY13 at no less than \$69 million. Maintaining current funding levels delivered in the most efficient way can contribute towards the original goals of the program and provide policy makers, forest managers, private investors, and others with the timely and accurate information they need to make sound decisions regarding the nation's forests.

Sincerely,

Alabama Forestry Association
Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, Inc.
American Forest & Paper Association
American Forest Foundation
American Forests
Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council
Biomass Thermal Energy Council
CarbonVerde, LLC
Empire State Forest Products Association
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Forest Resources Association
Framing Our Community
GMO Renewable Resources, LLC
Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association
Hardwood Plywood & Veneer Association
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association
Kentucky Forest Industries Association
Louisiana Forestry Association
Massachusetts Forest Landowners Association
Missouri Forest Products Association
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest Resources Program
National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
National Woodland Owners Association
Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Ohio Forestry Association
Oregon Women in Timber

Pennsylvania Forest Products Society
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Sitka Conservation Society
Siuslaw Institute
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
Society of American Foresters
South Carolina Forestry Association
Southern Forest Products Association
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Sustainable Northwest
Texas Forestry Association
The American Chestnut Foundation
The Forest Products Society
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
Treated Wood Council
Virginia Forest Products Association
West Fraser - Seaboard NC Sawmill

CC: Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies