

June 5, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

We are writing to express our strong support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and to encourage you to ensure it receives full, dedicated funding this year by passing the Great American Outdoors Act. Now more than ever, LWCF is critical to support local economies and maintain jobs in the woods, to ensure the timber industry remains strong, to meet our nation's forest product needs, to provide recreation access for sportsmen and others, and to ensure the future of America's forest lands. In 2019, permanent reauthorization of LWCF passed Congress by overwhelming majorities in both the House and Senate as part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act. Now, we hope you will enact legislation to ensure full, dedicated permanent funding for this vital program.

As some of the nation's major forest products companies and landowners, we have first-hand knowledge and understanding of the economic benefits that LWCF brings, particularly through the Forest Legacy Program. The Forest Legacy Program is a flexible and effective tool that supports our nation's forest-based economy, particularly in rural areas. According to the National Alliance of Forest Owners, working forests support more than 2.4 million jobs and contribute \$115 billion towards the GDP. Furthermore, forests filter almost 30% of our nation's drinking water and provide habitat for 60% of at-risk species.

The Forest Legacy Program has led to the conservation of over 2.7 million acres of working forest lands, primarily through conservation easement purchases, with over 50 percent of project costs leveraged from other non-federal sources. It is a voluntary conservation program that brings together federal, state, and private partners to achieve the common goals of protecting and maintaining forest jobs, recreational access, wildlife habitat, and clean water.

Forest products companies are also willing seller partners in many LWCF projects, which bring crucial and varied benefits to participating communities and to our continuing business operations. However, each year the time-sensitive demands for funding through LWCF and its component programs far surpass appropriated levels. Many of these multiyear projects are already under consideration or already underway. Secure, long-term LWCF funding will provide reliability and stability that is essential for our business plans.

Finally, we want to remind you that the LWCF does not use taxpayer dollars. It is already paid for using a very small amount of oil offshore drilling receipts. The LWCF program was created to offset the depletion of natural resources that belong to all Americans, and it should be empowered to fulfill that promise without further diversion of its intended funds.

On March 9th, Senator Gardner (R-CO) and Senator Manchin (D-WV) introduced the Great American Outdoors Act (S. 3422) which would finally guarantee full, permanent funding for LWCF and provide

funding for the maintenance backlog on our nation's public lands. This bipartisan legislation is set to come to the Senate floor for a vote in June, and already has 59 cosponsors and the support of the White House.

We appreciate those who have already signed on to support LWCF full funding and urge those who have not to cosponsor the Great American Outdoors Act to ensure our nation's natural resources are protected for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

American Forest Management, Inc.
Compass Land Consultants, Inc.
Conservation Resource Partners LLC
Conservation Forestry
Ecotrust Forest Management
Empire State Forest Products Association
F. H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co.
Forest Investment Associates
Gelbert, Fullbright & Randolph Forestry Consultants, PLLC
GreenWood Resources
Hancock Natural Resource Group
Lyme Timber Company
Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc.
Meadowsend Timberlands Limited
Merrill and Ring
Michigan-California Timber Company
Molpus Woodlands Group
National Alliance of Forest Owners
Pennsylvania Forest Products Association
Pingree Associates, Inc.
Port Blakely
PotlatchDeltic
Rayonier
Resource Management Service LLC
Sierra Pacific Industries
Southern Pines Plantations
Stimson Lumber Company
The Forestland Group
Timber Investment Resources, LLC
US Forest Capital
Weyerhaeuser