



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 15, 2013

Contact: Ann Forest Burns  
(503) 222-9505

### **Timber Industry Seeks Injunction Barring Federal Government's Suspension of Timber Contracts**

Portland, OR - Purchasers of federal timber sales and stewardship contracts filed [suit](#) yesterday against the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). They are asking the Oregon Federal District Court to [enjoin](#) the agencies from suspending timber contracts during the government shutdown.

The [American Forest Resource Council](#) (AFRC), an industry trade association, joined an action brought by [Murphy Company](#), [High Cascade, Inc.](#) and South Bay Timber, LLC.

“It makes zero sense for the cash strapped government to shut down operations that pay millions into the United States Treasury,” said Tom Partin, President of AFRC. “These companies employ loggers and truck drivers that need to be making money to feed their families. Getting logs out of the woods and into mill decks is especially important at this time of the year. Otherwise, these companies won’t be able to operate through the winter.”

Under contract law, the government cannot summarily stop timber operations. Contractors operate under harvest plans already approved by the agencies before ground work begins. As long as critical inspections are not needed, they can continue to work. Scheduled payments are made electronically, similar to those made by businesses making quarterly income tax payments.

“One of the purposes for these contracts is to improve forest health and reduce fuel for forest fires and protect federal and adjoining property. Issues of public safety in campgrounds and along roads are involved. Shutting down operations means these objectives won’t be met and things will get worse,” Partin said.

“A timber operation isn’t something you can turn on and off like a light switch. Once equipment has to be moved out, it can be months before it can be moved back in. For example, operators have waited through the fire season for helicopters to be available. If they can’t fly, they will start work on private contracts and it could be another year before they can come back. Meanwhile, downed timber rots on the ground,” Partin said.

“What is happening to our members is particularly frustrating when other businesses with contracts to operate on federal land, [such as ski areas](#), are being allowed to continue working,” Partin said.

5100 S.W. Macadam Avenue, Suite 350  
Portland, Oregon 97239  
Tel. (503) 222-9505 • Fax (503) 222-3255

The National Forest System includes approximately 190 million acres of public land throughout the United States. The BLM administers approximately 264 million acres of public lands. A blanket, unwarranted suspension of revenue-generating timber operations on these vast acres will have a devastating effect on individuals dependent on the timber industry and will exacerbate the impact of the government shutdown on the nation's economy.

Murphy Company employs over 500 people in its manufacturing facilities in Oregon and Washington. Timber from Forest Service and BLM contracts supplies over one-third of the raw material needs of its Oregon plants. High Cascade purchases timber from the Gifford Pinchot, Mt. Hood and Ochoco National Forests to supply mills in Carson, Washington and Hood River, Oregon. South Bay Timber currently has cutting rights under four stewardship contracts with the Forest Service and BLM on which it employs about 40 people.

AFRC is a regional trade association representing some 60 lumber, plywood and wood products manufacturers in California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. Its members utilize public timber in their manufacturing operations. In many areas where its member mills are located, the national forests are a significant source of timber supply because there are few private lands.