



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 3, 2011

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Portland, OR—Forest industry leaders commented today on the significance of a letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack from 59 members of Congress whose districts include over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 193 million acres of national forest and grass lands. The members of Congress are expressing concern over a [Proposed Forest Planning Rule](#) first issued in February and currently under review by the agency.

“We have been totally unable to understand the Forest Service’s reasoning on this Proposed Rule,” said Tom Partin, President, American Forest Resource Council, an association of Western forest product manufacturers. “Instead of simplifying their approach to land management, this rule would add layers of process and paper work without doing anything to improve the health of our forests or reduce the threat of wildfire and the attendant loss of wildlife habitat.”

[The bipartisan letter](#), organized by Congressmen Greg Walden (R-OR) and Mike Ross (D-AR), was signed by 59 members of Congress whose districts encompass 149,827,656 acres of Forest Service lands, including Western delegation members Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Jim Costa (D-CA), Doc Hastings (R-WA), Wally Herger (R-CA), Raul Labrador (R-ID), Tom McClintock (R-CA), Devin Nunes (R-CA), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Kurt Schrader (D-OR), and Mike Simpson (R-ID). The letter raises a number of concerns about the Proposed Rule, including the cost to the agency of implementing the rule in an era of shrinking federal budgets.

“The Forest Service has told us they are aiming for a rule that has broad based support and will avoid the litigation that has plagued prior rules. In our comments on the rule, we explained why we believe the opposite is true. Now that 59 members of Congress representing over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the National Forest system have expressed their strong concerns, we hope the Forest Service will reevaluate their approach,” said Partin.

The Congressional letter concludes,

“It is possible to meet the objectives of the National Forest Management Act and the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act without bogging the agency down with exercises that further separate it from the many citizens who depend on our nation’s forests for sustainable clean air, clean water, recreation, harvesting of fish and wildlife, grazing, and timber production. Please do not lose this opportunity to produce a planning rule that is truly simple, understandable, flexible and defensible in court.”

The American Forest Resource Council represents forest product manufacturers and landowners throughout the west and is based in Portland, Oregon.

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