

March 31, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

Our undersigned organizations represent hundreds of American businesses and tens of thousands of workers employed by the forest products industry. As you consider additional measures to assist workers, families, and the U.S. economy in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, we urge you to make strategic investments in our federal forests and public lands.

In these dynamic and challenging times, we strongly believe any federal taxpayer-funded stimulus package should prioritize investments in federal forests and public lands that:

- 1) Create or sustain American family-wage, year-round jobs;
- 2) Provide direct and lasting benefits to the American public and future generations; and
- 3) Build a resilient public and private forestry infrastructure and workforce to respond to declining forest health conditions as well as future global public health and economic disruptions.

The forest products industry, infrastructure, and workforce are constituted and positioned to grow to help achieve these national goals. As you consider additional supplemental investments in response to COVID-19, we strongly recommend the package include;

*\$250 Million for the National Forest System – Forest Products program*, to help prepare and offer timber sales to help sustain rural jobs, improve forest health, and reduce fire danger on our National Forests.

*\$250 Million for the National Forest System – Vegetation Management program*. These funds should be made available to implement NEPA ready projects in areas where proposed Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act projects have yet to receive final Secretarial approval.

*\$750 Million for Forest Service Capital Improvement & Maintenance – Roads.* This critical investment would address 20 percent of the Forest Service’s documented roads maintenance backlog. This funding should focus on providing access for resource management, recreation, and public safety.

*\$25 million for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Oregon & California – Western Oregon Resource Management* to allow the agency to accelerate efforts to increase timber management activities across over 2 million acres BLM forestland in western Oregon to create additional jobs, improve forest health, and generate revenues for essential local public services.

We believe the programs and amounts recommended can be timely and prudently implemented, providing some stability for hard hit rural economies, meaningful improvements in forest health, and a good return on the investment for the American taxpayer.

Investments in active forest management would help support existing and new manufacturing, transportation, and supply chain infrastructure while immediately creating thousands of family-wage jobs across the United States.

These investments would provide direct and lasting benefits to the American public and families by improving forest health, reducing wildfire and smoke risks, and growing recreation, hunting, fishing, and public access opportunities.

Finally, as determined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the forest products industry and its workforce are essential and critical to supplying goods, services, and supplies every American uses and needs, every day. Investments that bolster and grow this critical infrastructure now will help ensure the U.S. economy is more prepared, resilient, and responsive to future public health and economic challenges.

Federal Forest Resource Coalition  
Alaska Forestry Association  
American Walnut Manufacturers Assoc.  
Associated Oregon Loggers  
Carolina Loggers Association  
Great Lakes Timber Professionals Assoc.  
Minnesota Forest Industries  
Missouri Forest Products Association  
Montana Wood Products Association

American Forest Resource Council  
American Loggers Council  
Associated California Loggers  
California Forestry Association  
Colorado Timber Industry Assoc.  
Michigan Forest Products Council  
Minnesota Timber Producers Assoc.  
Montana Logging Association  
Oregon Forest Industries Council

Oregon Women In Timber  
Texas Forestry Association  
Washington Contract Loggers Association  
Washington Farm Forestry Association  
Western Hardwood Association

South Carolina Timber Producers A  
Texas Logging Council  
Washington Hardwoods Comm.  
West Virginia Forestry Association  
Western Pallet Association