



FOREST-CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

September 8, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
The Capitol, Room S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-232
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

The undersigned members of the Forest-Climate Working Group are writing to urge inclusion of important forest and forest products provisions in the budget reconciliation package currently under development. The [Forest-Climate Working Group](#) represents a diverse coalition of 78 member organizations spanning the entire forest sector, including state foresters, private landowners, forestry and forest products associations, carbon markets, academia, and national NGOs. We have worked together since 2007 to advance climate-smart forest policies, providing informed and balanced recommendations that are rooted in science, equity, and our unique expertise as forest practitioners.

America's forests, both public and privately owned, are an important part of our nation's natural, social and built infrastructure, including natural climate solutions. The reconciliation package has the potential to protect and grow our forests in ways that will enhance their climate action contributions, building from the nearly 15 percent of our nation's carbon dioxide emissions currently captured in our forests and forest products each year, as reported in the U.S. EPA Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Investing in forests for climate action will also enhance their capacity to address other environmental and natural infrastructure needs, such as cleaning our air and water, lowering surface temperatures and energy use, and serving as a home to wildlife. Investments in forests will generate as many as 40 jobs per million dollars invested.

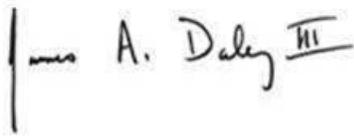
To capture this potential, the reconciliation package should make significant investments to benefit public and privately owned forests. In terms of both scale and scope, important forest funding provisions included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework provide a start in this direction. With a broader and more robust set of commitments to forest-based climate solutions, the reconciliation bill has the potential to dramatically increase the climate change benefits delivered by U.S. forests and forest products. Great care is also needed to safeguard the important investments of private forest owners by ensuring that tax policies preserve the economic value of timberland and the ability to transfer timberland intergenerationally, as well as recognize and incentivize the important environmental, social and economic outcomes they provide, including carbon sequestration and storage.

Specifically, the Forest-Climate Working Group encourages you to take the following five steps to champion our forest infrastructure in the reconciliation process:

- ***Invest in Conserving, Restoring, and Growing America's Forests***
Increased investment in public and private forests is essential if we are to maintain and expand healthy and resilient forest cover and continue to reap the benefits of forests' contribution to cleaning our air and water and providing abundant wildlife habitat. Necessary investment includes increased funding to reduce wildfire risk, to improve conservation and easement programs, and to provide tax and other incentives for forest owners to increase carbon benefits from forest management. Additionally, expanding tree cover through reforestation and investments in nurseries and seedling production will accelerate the potential for carbon removal from the atmosphere.
- ***Reduce the Carbon Footprint of America's Built Infrastructure***
Expanding the use of low-carbon-footprint building materials, like wood, using material-agnostic goals for reducing embodied carbon and based on independent, scientifically sound life cycle assessments will support rural and urban economies and the environment, while also helping the U.S. achieve its climate goals. Increased research investments in life cycle assessment and building code revisions are needed to drive preference for low-carbon-footprint materials.
- ***Invest in Rural America's Communities***
There are over 18,000 small and rural communities in America with populations between 2,500 and 25,000. Investing in these communities, through expansion of forest sector job training and creation of green spaces, will provide job opportunities and improve quality of life for rural populations.
- ***Invest in Forest Climate Data and Applied Science***
All climate investments require good scientific information delivered to the right users and decision makers. This includes baseline forest data through the U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA). Additional investment is needed to enhance the FIA program through means such as remote sensing, and to develop applied scientific information through forest-climate research, such as climate-driven threats to forests as revealed by vulnerability assessments.
- ***Invest in America's Urban Forests***
Trees are an important part of our urban infrastructure and critical to reducing energy costs and addressing our most pressing urban climate issues. In communities across America, the lowest income areas within urban environments and communities of color systematically have the greatest deficit of trees and green spaces. These areas should be prioritized as part of increased urban forest investment and should include jobs and training for local residents to maintain the urban forests.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to working with you to realize the full potential of America's forests.

Sincerely,



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American Forest Foundation
American Forests
American Wood Council
Arbor Day Foundation
Binational Softwood Lumber Council
Biomass Power Association
Blue Source LLC
Boise Cascade Company
Carbon 180
Chinook Forest Partners
Coalitions & Collaboratives, Inc.
Composite Panel Association
Drax Group PLC
EFM Investments & Advisory
Environmental Defense Fund
Enviva
Forest Landowners Association
Forest Stewards Guild
Hardwood Federation
Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners
Association
L&C Carbon
Land Trust Alliance
Minnesota Forestry Association
Molpus Woodlands Group

National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest
Resources Programs
National Woodland Owners Association
New England Forestry Foundation
Open Space Institute
Pingree Associates
PotlatchDeltic
Rayonier
RenewWest
Society of American Foresters
Sustainable Forestry and African American
Land Retention Network
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
The Forestland Group
The Lyme Timber Company
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Westervelt Company
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Western Landowners Alliance
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Weyerhaeuser