

October 2, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Stabenow, and Chairman Scott,

We are writing to express our strong support for the forestry provisions included in the reconciliation legislation, including the substantial investment in the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), to advance natural climate solutions that are urgently needed. Established by Congress in 1990 and administered through the USDA Forest Service, FLP assists states and private forest owners to maintain working forest lands through permanent conservation easement and fee acquisitions.

The program is a critical tool that invests in natural infrastructure and climate resilience by conserving forests that sequester carbon dioxide and protecting drinking water supplies that reduce the need for costly, man-made filtration and treatment systems. [According to the U.S. Forest Service](#), 180 million people in over 68,000 communities rely on forested lands to capture and filter their drinking water and forested lands sequester 14 percent of annual U.S. carbon emissions. In addition to recharging aquifers and providing alternatives to costly dam construction, natural water protection projects provide associated benefits for wildfire risk reduction not available through gray infrastructure investments. FLP investments also contribute to climate-smart development by preventing unwise residential expansion into the Wildland Urban Interface.

On top of these benefits, the program supports timber sector jobs and sustainable forest operations while protecting wildlife habitat, recreation access, and other public benefits provided by forests. Conserving working forest lands contributes significantly to local and state economies, especially in rural areas. The National Alliance of Forest Owners [reports](#) that U.S. forests support approximately 2.5 million jobs, \$109 billion in payroll, and \$288 billion in sales.

FLP has led to the conservation of over 2.885 million acres of working forest lands, primarily through conservation easement purchases, with more than 50 percent of project costs leveraged from 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.

Each year, millions of dollars' worth of ready-to-go projects are left unfunded, creating a backlog of urgent priorities. With the rapid pace and scale of forest conversion, now is the time to invest in forest protection before it is too late.

The forestry provisions in the reconciliation bill, including the Forest Legacy Program, are vital to fight the climate crisis through carbon sequestration, drinking water protection, and habitat resilience. We appreciate your work to protect America's forestland and look forward to working with you ensure these investments remain in the legislation.

Sincerely,

Alpine Shop, Ltd.
American Forests
American Hiking Society
Appalachian Mountain Club
Arizona Trail Association
Arroyo Seco Foundation
Ashley Sportsmans Club
Atlantic Salmon Federation
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Bearcub Outfitters
Blue Mountain Land Trust
Cadillac Area Land Conservancy
Californians for Western Wilderness
Capital Region Land Conservancy
Central Coast Land Conservancy
City Parks Alliance
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Connecticut Audubon Society
Connecticut Ornithology Association
Conserving Carolina
Forest Society of Maine
Forterra
Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Gaia Graphics and Associates
Garden Club of America
GoodFood World
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Great Peninsula Conservancy
Hood River Forest Collaborative
Housatonic Valley Association
IDEAS For Us
Inland Northwest Land Conservancy
International Mountain Bicycling Association

Izaak Walton League of America
League of Conservation Voters
Lummi Island Heritage Trust
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
Maine Conservation Voters
Maine Lakes
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Mainspring Conservation Trust
Mercury Press International
Monmouth Conservation Foundation
Montana Association of Land Trusts
Montana Wildlife Federation
Mountain Mamas
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
Mugglestone Gardens
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
Natural Resources Council of Maine
New Jersey Conservation Foundation
North Florida Land Trust
North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy
Northwoods Alliance Inc
Ohio Veterans Outdoors, Inc.
OLIN
Open Space Institute
Oregon Trails Coalition
Palouse Land Trust
Partners in Forestry
Partners in Forestry Cooperative & Northwoods Alliance Inc.
Partnership for the National Trails System
Piedmont Land Conservancy
Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park
Prickly Pear Land Trust

San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust
San Luis Obispo Parks, Open Space and
Trails Foundation
Scenic America
Skagit Audubon
Smith River Alliance
Sno-King Watershed Council
Society for the Protection of NH Forests
Somers Land Trust
South Florida Wildlands Association
South Jersey Land & Water Trust
Southern Appalachian Highlands
Conservancy
Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
Spottswode Winery, Inc.
The Conservation Fund
The Friends of Rachel Carson National
Wildlife Refuge
The Land Conservancy of McHenry County

The Lyme Timber Company
The Mountaineers
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
Three Rivers Land Trust
Transition Fidalgo
Vashon Maury Island Land Trust
Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust
Wallowa Land Trust
Washington Association of Land Trusts
West Springfield Park and Recreation
Department
Whidbey Camano Land Trust
Wild Montana
Wild Rivers Land Trust
Willistown Conservation Trust
Winyah River Alliance
7 Lakes Alliance
7 Oaks Ranch