



National Association of Conservation Districts

January 30, 2008

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Chairman
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts and 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level.

Through multiple use management of our renewable forest resources, a wide range of benefits are provided to the general public while ensuring the productivity of the land and protecting the quality of the environment. These benefits are achieved by managing resources under the best combination of uses employing proper resource management. The technical and financial assistance provided by the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry programs is critically necessary to the continued maintenance of these healthy, productive forested lands.

Throughout the country, the demands on our forest lands continue to increase. Because of changes in land ownership, land use, and other growing natural resource concerns, funding is increasingly the critical component in continuing these benefits.

To ensure this assistance continues to be available, NACD supports **\$289.021 million** in funding State and Private Forestry programs in the Fiscal Year 2009 Interior Appropriations Bill. The competitive resource allocation process put forward by the State and Private Forestry Redesign will ensure these funds address the national themes: conserve working forest landscapes, protect forests from harm and enhance public benefits from trees and forests. However, this will be impossible if the current means used to fund wildfire suppression is not changed. Wildfire suppression must be funded in a manner that does not impact all other Forest Service programs and puts an end to "fire borrowing".

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to our continued working together on State and Private Forestry programs.

Sincerely,

Steve Robinson
Acting President

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