



# National Association of Conservation Districts

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January 30, 2008

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Chairwoman  
Interior and Environment Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Wayne Allard  
Ranking Member  
Interior and Environment Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman 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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