



May 9, 2019

The Honorable Deb Haaland, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
House Natural Resources Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Haaland and Ranking Member Young:

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) writes to voice our support for the *Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2019*. We applaud this bill and the effort to identify and address the barriers to increasing the pace and scale of active forest management on National Forest System (NFS) lands managed by the USDA Forest Service (USFS). NASF is comprised of the heads of the state forestry agencies in all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories. State Foresters directly manage more than 63 million acres of publicly-owned land and provide technical and financial assistance to private forest owners who manage roughly two-thirds of the nation's forests. State Foresters have a strong interest in the health and productivity of all forests and are concerned that the current level of active management on NFS lands is insufficient to address the scope, scale, and pace needed to restore these forests to a more resilient condition.

Our federal forests face threats to their long-term health and sustainability across the spectrum of social, economic, and ecological impacts. Given the realities of current policy and appropriations, and despite the best efforts of the USFS, wildfire and insect and disease outbreaks continue to drive uncharacteristic landscape-level change on NFS lands while the backlog of acreage in need of forest management grows by tens of millions of acres. Rural forested communities and counties near federal lands continue to experience high unemployment and underemployment and struggle to meet demand for public services. Congress must take action to change the trajectory of our NFS lands. The benefits we all expect from these federal forests – including clean air, clean water, jobs from a viable forest products business sector, recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and home grown commodities for our nation's economy – are at risk if Congress does not act. We encourage you to continue the dialogue and to move forward with the ideas included in the *Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2019*, which

Executive Director

Jay Farrell

2018-19 Executive Committee

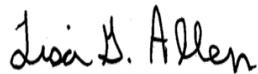
President Lisa Allen, Missouri
Vice President Greg Josten, South Dakota
Treasurer Joe Fox, Arkansas
Past President George Geissler, Washington

Northeastern Representative Don VanHassent, Maryland
Western Representative Brian Cottam, Utah
Southern Representative Scott Bissette, North Carolina

continues to receive bi-partisan support in Congress. We support the work to identify and directly address the barriers preventing the USFS from doing more to proactively manage forests to ensure continued delivery of social, economic, and ecological benefits from our federal forests. The USFS works hard to deliver critically needed management on NFS lands, but they are hampered in many cases by regulation and policy that was established in an earlier time to address a different set of needs and issues, administrative costs, declining budgets, and increasing fire suppression expenses. We also believe that Congress needs to address serious administrative and legal process barriers in order for the USFS to succeed in fully implementing existing Forest Plans.

NASF urges you to continue working to find solutions and to deliver real change to the management of our federal forests. We need your leadership to enact legislation to enable the USFS to deliver the work contemplated in publicly-vetted Forest Plans and we stand ready to assist in supporting legislative solutions to improve the social, economic, and ecological sustainability of federal forest lands today and for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa B. Allen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Lisa Allen
Missouri State Forester
NASF President