



To: Ohio U.S. Congressional Delegation

U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior & Related Agencies, Committee on Agriculture, Environment, & Forestry, Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, & Related Agencies, Committee on Natural Resources

RE: Proposed Cuts to US Forest Service State and Private Forestry FY 2009

Dear

Representing the Ohio Society of American Foresters (OSAF), the OSAF Executive Committee wishes to voice OSAF support of the National Association of State Foresters' (NASF) FY 2009 Forest Service budget recommendation to the Senate Committee on Appropriations (see attached.) However, OSAF is opposed to the Administration's proposed FY 2009 budget which drastically cuts budgets to the USFS State and Private Forestry Program. The State and Private Forestry Program comprised 5.9% of the USFS budget in FY08, and the proposed FY09 budget reduces this to 2.7%.

Ohio forests are facing extreme pressure from exotic insects and diseases, invasive plants, urban development, unusual weather events, forestland parcelization, and land use change. Since most of Ohio's forests are privately owned, it is imperative that woodland owners continue to receive the professional support necessary to manage and maintain the health, productivity, and sustainability of our forestlands.

The Administration's budget cuts, particularly to State and Private Forestry, threaten the future of programs that foster forest management activities by Ohio's 332,600 private woodland owners. About 93% of the state's 7.6 million acres of timberland are privately owned, and provide over 91% of the harvestable timber resource. The state's forest products industry, which relies heavily upon this timber resource, contributes \$15.1 billion to Ohio's economy annually, employing more than 119,000 people and generating more than \$4 billion in payroll. Needless to say, the proposed budget cuts to the State and Private Forestry Program will directly impact both Ohio's forests and economy.

OSAF – the state chapter of the Society of American Foresters – is the state's scientific and educational organization of the forestry profession in Ohio, with a membership that includes a vast array of forestry professionals. We share a commitment to grow productive, sustainable forests for future generations and recognize the need for responsible Federal support to reach this goal. Accordingly, we urge you to consider and support the NASF FY 2009 Forest Service budget recommendations of: \$53 million for Cooperative Forest Health Management on non-Federal lands; \$50 million for State Fire Assistance under Cooperative Fire Protection; \$45 million, \$75 million and \$36 million for Forest Stewardship, Forest Legacy, and Urban and Community Forestry, respectively, under Cooperative Forestry; and \$13 million and \$95 million for Forest Health Coop and State Fire Assistance, respectively, under State and Private Forestry in Wildland Fire Management.

Please contact me, or one of our officers, if you have any questions about this issue or any other Ohio forest concerns you may have.

Regards,

ROGER A. WILLIAMS, POLICY CHAIR

Ohio Society of American Foresters

Phone: (614) 688-4061

Email: williams.1577@osu.edu