



Stepanie Miller
Chair
Ohio Society of American Foresters
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1933 E. Dublin-Granville Rd. #327
Columbus, OH 43229
419-429-8313
treerustler@gmail.com

Mr. Michael Goergen
Executive Vice-President
Society of American Foresters
5400 Grosvenor Lane,
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-2198

Dear Mr. Goergen,

On behalf of the Ohio Society of American Foresters Executive Committee, I am writing in objection to SAF's recommendation to the Senate Committee on Appropriations FY 2009 Forest Service budget (testimony dated April 23, 2008.) Of particular concern is the recommendation to "restore" the State and Private Forestry budget to only \$207.5 million rather than to *at least* the FY 2008 budget figure of \$262.7 and the disproportionate **reduction** in State and Private funding to 78% of the FY 08 budget.

In comparison, your recommendations include a 16% increase in DOI Fire, maintaining 100% funding for BLM Forest Management, and increases of 2% for Forest/Range Research, and 8% for Wildland Fire budgets. State and Private Forestry Funding, one of the most efficient and cost effective investments the United States can make to manage our country's forestlands, was only 5.9% of the FY 08 budget. SAF's recommendation reduces this critical program to 4.75 %. In reality, the proposed budget by the National Association of State Foresters of \$348.4 is a better reflection of the needs required to maintain basic forest management programs in Ohio and across the United States.

In addition to the disappointing recommendation, we find the process in which this recommendation was developed to be unacceptable. Issues of such importance should be designed to reflect the position of SAF membership. We do not recall our members or, at the very least, leadership at the state or council level being asked prior to this testimony whether this was an acceptable recommendation on our behalf. Ohio SAF is especially concerned because an estimated 45-50% of our membership will be directly impacted by the proposed budget cuts to the State and Private Forestry Program.

As you know, 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 and productivity of our forestlands. The Administration's proposed budget cuts and SAF's recommendation threaten the future of programs that foster forest management activity by Ohio's woodland owners, municipalities, and other local agencies.



Well managed, privately-owned forests and urban forests are critical to the healthy economy of Ohio and most of the eastern United States. Our forest products industry, largely supplied by private forests, annually contributes \$15.1 billion to Ohio's economy, employs more than 119,000 people, and generates more than \$4 billion in payroll. Ohio's healthy urban forests contribute to our communities' safety, reduced energy consumption, and economic well-being. As we move into the next decade, properly managed forest systems will be important carbon sinks and biomass sources for greener energy production.

Our membership includes a diverse aspect of professional foresters who share a commitment to grow productive forests for future generations *and* recognize the need for responsible, Federal support to reach this goal. We urge SAF to reconsider our organization's budget recommendation to better align itself with the real forest management needs in the United States by adopting the funding recommendations of the National Society of State Foresters.

Regards,

Chair
Ohio Society of American Foresters

Cc: Nadine Block, Chair, SAF Policy Committee
Michael Mortimer, SAF Policy Manager
Tom Thompson, SAF President
Bernard Hubbard, SAF Vice President
Roger Weaver, SAF District 9 Council Representative

Attachment: NASF 2008 FY09 Budget Recommendations: USDA Forest Service
Letter to Ohio Congressional Delegation and Committee on Appropriations