September 22, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Chair, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Chair, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
Chair, Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Angie Craig
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jason Smith
Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Ranking Member Murray, Chair Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, Chair Crapo, Ranking Member Wyden, Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, Chair Smith, and Ranking Member Neal:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to request targeted economic and disaster assistance to address the unprecedented financial pressures facing America's family forest owners who, despite providing roughly 42 percent of the U.S. wood supply, are navigating market contraction and devastation from natural disasters without the safety net available to traditional agricultural producers.

The forestry sector is experiencing an economic crisis. Since 2014, the industry has lost approximately 35 pulp mills and over 100 sawmills, resulting in an estimated $730 million annual loss in market value due to depressed pulpwood and stumpage prices and increased transportation costs. Industry leading analysts have reported an 11% decrease in U.S. weighted average pricing for roundwood and chips (combined) in Q2 of 2026, compared to the same quarter in 2025[1]. Unlike traditional farmers who face seasonal input cost fluctuations, forest owners are facing long term market closures. When these markets disappear, long-cycle forest producers do not have the ability to pivot to a new crop in the next season.

In addition to these market failures, forest producers are experiencing devastating losses due to natural disasters such as wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding. Congress has repeatedly provided substantial recovery and economic assistance to agricultural producers. Most recently, the American Relief Act provided more than $30 billion in agricultural disaster assistance, including more than $16 billion to compensate producers for crop production, quality, and revenue losses. Private forest owners, by contrast, primarily have access to the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP), which helps share the cost of debris removal, but does not compensate owners for the value of the timber inventory or income destroyed by the disaster. Similarly, USDA's Tree Assistance Program expressly excludes trees grown for commercial timber.

A robust forest resilience and recovery package will give private forest owners the same basic opportunity Congress provides other commodity producers: the ability to recover, reinvest, and remain on the land. To that end, our organizations recommend enactment of the following direct funding policies before the end of the 119th Congress.

1. <u>Emergency Forest Restoration Program</u>

    - Provide $1 billion to the Emergency Forest Restoration Program, which is out of resources and will be sorely needed in the wake of the wildfires and other disasters of 2026.

2. <u>Market Economic Assistance</u>

    - Provide $500 million in direct economic relief funding to family forest landowners struggling to retain ownership of their land under difficult economic conditions. This $500 million would partially offset the roughly $730 million in annual market value lost by landowners due to recent pulpwood mill closures. This assistance could be modeled on past successful programs such as the American Relief Act of 2025, the Farmer Bridge Assistance Program, and the USDA's Market Facilitation Program.

<u>Additional Priorities</u>

While direct economic and disaster assistance remains our most urgent priority, we also strongly support the following initiatives:

- Provide $200M in supplemental funding for implementation and administration of State, Private, and Tribal programs of the U.S Forest Service, which would unlock much-needed infusions of resources across a variety of programs that support private landowners through funding of State Forest Action Plans, the Forest Stewardship Program and Forest Health.
- Provide $1 billion in new funding to continue implementation and administration of the Forest Service's Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program (CWDG). This popular effort has

[1] https://forisk.com/wp-content/uploads/20260616-Press-Release-Forisk-Wood-Fiber-Review.pdf

provided $750 million thus far to private forest landowners and fire-prone rural communities to reduce hazardous fuels and foster greater wildfire resilience planning. Because the funding for CWDGs was “one-time” money, this critical program will run out of resources after the current grant cycle. Alongside new investments, we also encourage you to incorporate the program reform changes outlined in section 204 of the Senate’s Fix our Forests Act, S. 1462.

- Enacting the Save America’s Family Forests Act, S. 4442 and H.R. 8538, that would allow owners of private forestland to immediately expense the cost of reforestation following natural disasters.

As the 119th Congress concludes, we have a critical window to support family forest owners and stabilize the critical supply chains that family-owned forests provide. We urge you to take immediate, decisive action to ensure that America’s family forest owners have the disaster support, market access support, and the forest health and restoration investments necessary to keep our forests standing and thriving. Thank you for the consideration of the above sentiments and recommendations. We look forward to partnering with you to secure a stronger and more resilient future for our nation’s forests.

Sincerely,

American Forest Foundation
American Forests
American Loggers Council
Association of Consulting Foresters
The Conservation Fund
Forest Landowners Association
National Association of State Foresters
National Woodland Owners Association
The Nature Conservancy
Society of American Foresters
Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Network

CC:
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Senate Finance Subcommittee on Energy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure
Leadership of the U.S. Senate
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Agriculture
House Committee on Natural Resources
House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Tax
Leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives