



MONTANA SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

STATE SOCIETY CHAPTERS

EASTERN MONTANA CHAPTER

FLATHEAD CHAPTER

LIBBY CHAPTER

MISSOULA CHAPTER

STUDENT CHAPTER - THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

January 14, 2015

Senator Steve Daines
1 Russell Senate Courtyard
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Honorable, Senator Daines:

On behalf of the Montana Society of American Foresters' members, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on future forest reform legislation. Your support of active management on National Forest Lands to achieve forest health, economic benefit to rural communities, and raw materials for our Timber Industry infrastructure is greatly appreciated. Montana SAF Forest Policy Committee provides the following comments for your consideration and looks forward to future discussion with you and your staff.

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the world's largest organization of natural resource professionals with nearly 15,000 members. It advances the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry for the benefit of society. SAF is the accrediting body for professional and technical forestry colleges and schools in our nation, and is also responsible for certification of professional foresters. Our national office, based in Bethesda, MD is engaged with Congressional Staff and Committee Staff on a wide variety of natural resource issues through Policy Director, John Barnwell 1-301-897-8720 x 300. We were very involved in issues such as the 2014 Farm Bill Forestry Titles, the non-point pollution issue on forest roads, forestry research through Forest Inventory, and Analysis program at USFS Research Stations, Appropriations, and much more. Regular testimony by the SAF in Committee hearings has been appreciated by those committee members due to our credible science based background and balanced membership. Position statements are produced every year by the National SAF Committee on Forest Policy. Retired Seeley Lake District Ranger, Tim Love is a member of this committee. These position statements are often used as the basis for testimony and also set the direction for all individual State Chapter Forest Policy efforts and the Montana SAF Forest Policy Committee for consistency across our broad membership.

Currently, our National SAF Policy Director, John Barnwell, is very interested in bringing the conversation on forest reform to the nationwide reform level and not only for specific areas. SAF has a long history of collaborative efforts with a variety of interests to achieve common goals. For example, SAF is an active member of the CFLRA Coalition for continued appropriations to accomplish large landscape level stewardship and restoration projects. Of particular interest is the binding arbitration section in

Barrasso's 2014 bill. Our understanding is that the National SAF Committee on Forest Policy will have increased discussions this year on the topic of forest reform to increase the pace and scale of the on-the-ground treatments, the first of which will be the Fire Suppression Bill which will treat catastrophic fire seasons more like FEMA for natural disasters.

Across Montana, Fire-Borrowing delays projects on the ground and reduces the ability of the Forest Service to accomplish necessary forest management. Another major challenge certainly revolves around delays and legal actions. Montana members are interested in promoting the following ideas for federal forest lands:

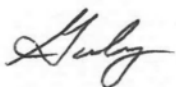
- Require bonding for litigants
- Injunctive relief on process based complaints
- Strengthening counterpart regulations to relieve delays with US Fish and Wildlife Service decisions
- Mandatory in-person meetings for objectors on projects, and reasonable, predictable appropriations to provide project resources and manpower.

Federal forest lands under the management of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management comprise the majority of forest lands across Montana and a viable and sustainable forest management infrastructure cannot exist without reasonable contributions of forest raw materials from these lands. Although much of our current concerns are focused on federal lands, private and State forests are also extremely important to our ecosystems and wood products infrastructure. Supporting continued funding for federal cost-share programs that provide applied educational and forestry practices assistance also remains a priority for the Montana SAF members.

Montana Society of American Foresters Forest Policy Committee appreciates the opportunity to provide comments for your consideration and is open to any follow up conversation on Forest Reform. We strongly suggest your staff engages with our National Director of Forest Policy to develop a long term relationship with our very credible organization. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me at your convenience.

We appreciate your interest in helping develop practical and timely solutions regarding forest management across our state.

Sincerely,



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Cc: Senator Tester
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