

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Coalition

August 20, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Conaway
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson:

The undersigned organizations commend the House and Senate for highlighting the importance of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) by adding improvements to the program in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. We respectfully request the conference committee ensure an extension and increased authorized level of funding for CFLRP in the final Farm Bill.

Forests provide half our nation's water, support millions of jobs, store carbon, produce timber, offer vast recreational opportunities, provide habitat to thousands of species, and generate billions of dollars in annual economic activity. Yet the health of our forests is in decline, with an area the size of Oregon in need of restoration on National Forest System lands alone (more than 80 million acres). Invasive pests and diseases, chronic drought, and increasingly expensive megafires jeopardize life and livelihood in rural and urban communities.

Overcoming these challenges requires an approach to federal forest management focused on large-scale, community-driven collaboration to increase the pace and scale of restoration, promote healthy forests, and protect the lives and well-being of communities and landowners. The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program is the Forest Service's signature program that accomplishes these goals.

Since 2010, 23 CFLRP projects in 14 states have sold more than 2.5 billion board feet of timber; created \$1.4 billion in local labor income; and improved 760 miles of trails for sports enthusiasts and recreation. CFLRP creates or maintains 5,400 jobs each year and has restored an area the size of Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks combined, all while deepening agency commitments to collaborative planning.

Extending CFLRP and increasing its authorized funding level will allow existing projects to complete implementation of their restoration plans, as well as allow for selection of new projects on forests in need of active management across the nation. With yet another extreme

wildfire season confronting our national forests, firefighters, and communities, it is more imperative than ever that we maintain programs such as CFLRP to take a proactive and comprehensive approach to wildfire risk reduction and improved forest resilience.

We extend our appreciation to the Agriculture committee members and conference committee members from both chambers as they work to complete and pass a Farm Bill that will improve the health of our national forests for current and future generations. As the committee begins its work to reconcile these two bills, we urge you to extend this essential program through FY 2023 and increase the authorized funding level to \$80 million annually in the final Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

American Forests
Forest Business Network
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
Society of American Foresters
Sustainable Northwest
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society