

October 27, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
U.S. Senator
Chair, Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator
Rnk. Mbr, Senate Energy & Natural Resources
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Bingaman and Senator Murkowski:

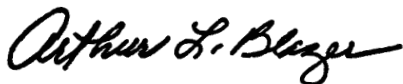
The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) and the Society of American Foresters (SAF) would like to thank you for scheduling a Senate Energy & Natural Resources hearing on Senate Bill 1122, the *Good Neighbor Forestry Act*. The intent of Senate Bill 1122 is to expand the use of the 'Good Neighbor Authority' throughout the western United States. Our organizations are supportive of the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and hope to see its continued and expanded use in the western United States.

The GNA allows state forestry agencies to act as an agent for the federal agencies to complete similar or complementary treatments across state, federal and private boundaries. This authority was successfully piloted in Colorado and Utah where this critical authority leverages limited resources for the betterment of healthy forests. Work done through this authority has included forest, rangeland and watershed restoration and protection services activities such as insect treatment, hazardous fuels activities and watershed restoration including fish and wildlife habitats. The GNA can also be used to build upon other cross boundary opportunities where local interest and support exists.

The GNA is especially important in the western United States due to the significant amount of public lands and near-by communities that are dependant on our forested landscapes. Working across boundaries, in an 'all-lands' approach, will become even more important as forestland becomes more fragmented, land development in the Wildland-Urban Interface increases and climate change continues to impact our environment. Collaboration across land ownerships, government agencies and communities is the key to success on the ground.

The intent of the GNA is to allow for complementary forest management projects and activities across land ownerships in the West, not to bypass federal or state requirements currently in place. It is our understanding that concerns of this nature have arisen with the current legislative language in S. 1122. Both the SAF and the CWSF pledge to work with the Bill sponsors and the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee to address any concerns with S. 1122. Please contact Erica Rhoad (301-897-8720) or Caitlyn Pollihan (303-445-4363) with any questions.

Sincerely,



Arthur 'Butch' Blazer
New Mexico State Forester and
Chairman, Council of Western State Foresters



Michael T. Goergen
Executive Vice President and CEO
Society of American Foresters

cc: The Honorable John Barrasso
The Honorable Tim Johnson
The Honorable Mark Udall
The Honorable Michael Bennet
The Honorable Jim Risch
The Honorable Robert Bennett