

July 26, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee
on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee
on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

As 59 forest and forest products organizations, we represent the nation's full forest-sector value chain supporting 2.9 million American jobs. We urge you to confirm Robert Bonnie as Under Secretary for Food Production and Conservation (FPAC) at the Department of Agriculture. This role oversees critical agricultural production and conservation programs that serve the full array of forest owners, farmers, ranchers, and other landowners. Mr. Bonnie is the right person at the right time for this important role. He is a nominee with an exceptional understanding of the department, the importance of working lands to meet societal needs, and of the climate and conservation challenges our country is facing.

Through his distinguished career promoting rural conservation and climate solutions, Mr. Bonnie has continuously engaged forest owners, farmers, and ranchers to identify and advance outcomes that are mutually beneficial to the climate and the landowner. During his time at Duke University and the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), he built consensus across the political spectrum to advance solutions to natural resource and climate challenges that economically benefit working lands and rural communities.

At the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Bonnie brings eight years of experience working across the department and specifically within Natural Resources & Environment (NRE). His NRE role included supervision of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which involved managing the largest government source of conservation funding on private lands. This depth of experience with the department will serve Mr. Bonnie well in his new role as he continues to find creative and consensus-driven solutions in climate and conservation.

After leaving USDA, Mr. Bonnie has advanced ways to increase the role of private working forests and forest products as a solution to address a variety of pressing needs, including climate change mitigation, wildlife conservation, and rural investment. He has provided leadership on climate within the forestry community, serving as the neutral convenor for the [CEO Principles on Working Forests as a Natural Climate Solution](#), signed by 43 CEOs of leading private forestry companies along with the CEOs of the National Alliance of Forest Owners, The Nature Conservancy, the Environmental Defense Fund, American Forests, and the American Forest Foundation. He also served as a steering committee member of the [Forest-Climate Working Group](#), a sector-wide coalition focused on forests and forest products as natural climate solutions. His leadership in each of these efforts has been a catalytic force for finding common ground between diverse interests to achieve outcomes at scale.

Mr. Bonnie has also been a champion of wildlife conservation, and has been very active in working with the forestry sector and a breadth of stakeholders to advance collaborative outcomes on private land, following the model of efforts like the [Wildlife Conservation Initiative](#)

and Conservation without Conflict. Mr. Bonnie's leadership in such efforts have increased confidence in working land stewardship and is leading to real impact.

We are confident that, if confirmed as Under Secretary for Food Production and Conservation, Mr. Bonnie will draw on his network and experience to build broad stakeholder support for solutions that achieve climate and conservation objectives by supporting privately owned working lands and increasing rural economic prosperity.

Thank you for your consideration of Mr. Bonnie's nomination, and we welcome a speedy and bipartisan confirmation so he can begin his service with broad congressional support.

Sincerely,

Alabama Forestry Association
Arkansas Forestry Association
American Forest Foundation
American Forests
American Wood Council
BBC Land, LLC
BTG Pactual Timberland Investment Group
Campbell Global
California Forestry Association
Caswell Thompson
CatchMark
Composite Panel Association
Coastal Forest Resources Company
The Conservation Fund
Empire State Forest Products Association
Enviva
Federal Forest Resource Coalition
Florida Forestry Association
The Forestland Group
Forest Resources Association
Forest Landowners Association
Forestry Association of South Carolina
Georgia Forestry Association
Giustina Resources
Green Diamond Resource Company
Hancock Natural Resource Group
The Hardwood Federation
Idaho Forest Group
Jamestown, L.P.
Lone Rock Resources
Louisiana Forestry Association

Massachusetts Forest Alliance
Maine Forest Products Council
Merrill & Ring Inc.
Michigan-California Timber Company
Mississippi Forestry Association
Molpus Woodlands Group
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of State Foresters
NCX
New Forests
New Hampshire Timberland Owners
Association
North Carolina Forestry Association
Pingree Associates, Inc.
Port Blakely
PotlatchDeltic
Rayonier
Resource Management Service LLC
Salt River Project
Sierra Pacific Industries
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers
Association
Starker Forests Inc.
Texas Forestry Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Timberland Investment Resources, LLC
Washington Forest Protection Association
The Westervelt Company
West Virginia Forestry Association
Weyerhaeuser

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry