

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008

Title VIII – Forestry

- **ESTABLISHES NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR ASSISTING PRIVATE FOREST CONSERVATION:** The forestry title establishes national priorities for private forest conservation. These priorities include:
 - conserving and maintaining working forest landscapes for multiple uses;
 - protecting forests from threats to forest health; and
 - enhancing public benefits from private forests.
- **ESTABLISHES A NEW COMMUNITY FOREST AND OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROGRAM:** This program provides matching funds to help county or local governments or non-profit organizations purchase from willing sellers private forests that are threatened by conversion to non-forest use and are economically, culturally, and environmentally important to communities
- **STRENGTHENS AUTHORITIES TO PREVENT ILLEGAL LOGGING PRACTICES:** This provision represents an important step for combating the international and domestic problem of illegal logging. American manufacturers are increasingly struggling to compete with the low-priced wood and wood products being harvested from illegal sources. This provision allows the criminal and civil penalties of the Lacey Act to apply to the sale and trade of wood and wood products harvested illegally.
- **DIRECTS FOREST SERVICE CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COOPERATION:** The forestry title strengthens the Secretary of Agriculture's ability to work with Indian tribes relating to reburials on National Forest land, to allow temporary closure of National Forest land for tribal cultural and traditional purposes, and to permit tribal access to forest products from National Forest land for noncommercial traditional and cultural purposes.
- **ASSISTS EMERGENCY FOREST RESTORATION:** A new authority is established to help restore private forest land after disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires.
- **HEALTHY FOREST RESERVE PROGRAM:** The Healthy Forest Reserve Program is a voluntary program established for the purpose of enhancing forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration. The current 99 year easement option is replaced with a permanent easement option. Indian tribes are allowed to enter into 10-year cost-share agreements or 30-year contracts that are equivalent to the value of a 30-year easement. Of the funds expended in a fiscal year, not more that 40 percent of the funding may be used for cost-share agreements while not more than 60 percent may be used for easements. A repooling date of April 1 is put in place to address potential high demand for a particular enrollment method. Mandatory funding of \$9.75 million is provided for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2012.