



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

May 30, 2007

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

I am pleased to share with you legislative language that would implement the forestry provisions of the Administration's proposals for the 2007 farm bill. We have been asked by Members and staff to provide a draft for their consideration.

I believe that our comprehensive proposals can be the building blocks for a farm bill that is more equitable, predictable, and better able to withstand challenge. The forestry proposals are broad—ranging from State cooperative forestry assistance to developing better means of utilizing woody biomass resources.

The proposal would authorize technical and financial assistance for each State forestry agency to develop and implement a statewide forest resource assessment and plan with the goal of realizing comprehensive statewide forest planning in each State. A competitive landscape-scale grant program would be created to develop innovative solutions that address local forest management issues, develop local non-traditional forest product markets, and stimulate local economies through creation of value-added forest product industries.

A new wood-to-energy program would be established to accelerate the development and use of new technologies to more productively utilize low-value woody biomass resources, offsetting the demand for fossil fuels and improving forest health. Finally, a community forests working lands program would (1) provide financial support to communities for the acquisition of easements and for purchases of community forests and (2) provide technical assistance to communities engaged in forest resource planning.

I have consulted with the Office of Management and Budget, and they advise that enactment of this legislation would be in accordance with the President's program.

Chairmen and Ranking Members

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I appreciate your consideration of the legislative language that correlates with our 2007 farm bill forestry proposals. I would be happy to further discuss these proposals with you or any member of Congress, and to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike Johanns".

Mike Johanns
Secretary

Enclosures