

United States Senate Committee on  
**AGRICULTURE  
NUTRITION  
& FORESTRY**

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman

## **Healthy Trees and Forests**

### *Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012*

The U.S. Senate's 2012 Farm Bill is critical for America's tree farmers, Christmas tree growers, foresters, biomass plants, and forest product manufacturers. By increasing access to the BioPreferred program, promoting conservation on private forestlands, and improving forestry initiatives on public land, the Senate-passed Farm Bill will create new economic opportunities for forestry. Healthy forests support clean drinking water, critical wildlife habitats, recreational opportunities, and most importantly, jobs for our families and communities.

#### **Improves Market Opportunities for Forest Products**

The Biobased Markets Program and the associated BioPreferred label help consumers identify products with high biobased contents and innovative production approaches that reduce petroleum dependency. The Farm Bill changes the eligibility to ensure that wood products, which are often excluded from these programs, can compete on a level playing field.

#### **Strengthens Programs for Tree Growers**

The bill expands specialty crop block grants, which go to states to support research and promotion of fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops like Christmas trees. It also adjusts the grant allocation to ensure states receive proper credit for high-value crops like trees.

#### **Promotes Conservation for Private Forestland Owners**

Nonindustrial private forest owners have access to the full range of conservation programs in the Farm Bill, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The 2012 Farm Bill also removes a cap on the number of forested acres allowed to be enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program at any one time. The program, already popular with forest owners, provides access to high levels of resource-benefitting conservation practices. The bill also reauthorizes the Healthy Forest Reserve Program, a voluntary program that enhances forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration.

#### **Saves Forests from Sprawl and Development**

Forest lands are facing developmental pressures from both residential growth and agriculture. The bill reauthorizes the Forest Legacy Program as well as the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program, which protect forests threatened by conversion to non-forest use.

#### **Supports Forest Restoration and Rural Development**

The Farm Bill extends a successful tool called Stewardship End-Result Contracting that supports forest restoration work in areas without strong wood markets while providing value for local communities.

#### **Addresses Forest Health Concerns**

Many of our national forest acres are threatened by insect infestation and disease. To address these risks to forest health, the bill requires the Secretary of Agriculture to designate treatment areas for forestlands that have been especially hard-hit. The bill also allows the Secretary, where appropriate, to treat acres to improve stand health and resilience.