August 28, 2013

Congressman Doc Hastings
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
United States House, Washington DC

Congressman Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee
United States House, Washington DC

Dear Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member DeFazio

A phrase such as “money does not grow on trees” is quite often overused. However in Americas national forests money and jobs do grow on trees. Unfortunately a failed Federal Forest management system has led to the loss of Thousands of family wage jobs and has left out rural forested counties with a myriad of social and economic problems we do not deserve and need to be addressed. For most of our counties that can only be done by returning to a sustainable harvest level that absolutely will provide family wage jobs and allow for a solid tax base to support badly needed services.

From our perspective there are at least three reoccurring themes hindering sustainable forest management; First is of funding to prepare sales, second is the environmental analysis and review time for management activities, and third is litigation that stalls or totally stops much of the harvest that badly needs to be done. .

An increase in sustainable forest management is essential if we are to ever provide the healthy forests that were envisioned by President Theodore Roosevelt. The Forest mortality we are facing now is destroying habitat for wildlife, creating a catastrophic situation for massive wildfire’s that destroy everything in their path and leaving millions of acres of forests susceptible to massive bug and insect infestation.

H.R 1526 addresses all of these issues. It provides a common sense approach for returning to sustainable forest management where the planned harvest can occur in a reasonable amount of time. We do appreciate that the legislation allows for a temporary extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act. However for long term social and financial health of rural forested communities we must have the family wage jobs that are provided by a healthy forest products industry. We will fully support H.R. 1526 when it comes to the House floor and will certainly contact our House members to speak in support and vote for the bill.