

March 15, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce,

The undersigned organizations are strong supporters of the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program funded by the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service). We rely on the inventory data and analysis of America's forests provided by the program, which make up the backbone of scientific knowledge on the current state of the nation's forests. This critical information is needed to support sound policy and forest management decisions, both public and private, and is increasingly important for decisions regarding new and expanding markets. We urge the Congress to support the FIA program and request funding for the program in **FY 2020 of at least \$83 million to move the program toward providing an accurate and timely inventory of America's forests.** We also urge the inclusion of language ensuring that this funding would, at minimum, maintain historic remeasurement cycles—every 7 years in the east and every 10 years in the west—as referenced by the Administration.

The data and information collected by FIA serves as the basis for: identifying trends in forest ownership; measuring carbon stocks; assessing fish and wildlife habitat; evaluating wildfire, insect, and disease risk; predicting the spread of invasive species; determining capital investment in existing forest products facilities and selecting locations for new forest product facilities; and identifying and responding to priorities identified in State Forest Action Plans.

The FIA program is utilized by a large set of diverse stakeholders interested in the state of America's forests. These include forest resource managers at mills, land managers, conservation groups, university students and faculty, and State and Federal agencies, such as the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The undersigned organizations would like to work with Congress to further explore program potential. An annual funding level of \$83 million would support a seven-year annualized program in the east, and a 10-year program in the west as recommended in the Forest Service's 2007 FIA Strategic Plan. In 2015 the Forest Service released an updated FIA Strategic Plan, which outlines a variety of potential program deliverables at funding levels. While we are supportive of at least \$83 million in funding for FY20, the 2015 Strategic Plan calls for \$103 million to implement the five-year annualized program called for in the 1998 Farm Bill. This reduction in cycle length would provide more accurate data to support important forest resource decisions.

As engaged partners, we are interested in working with Congress and the Forest Service to make program delivery as efficient as possible and to support additional federal investment to implement many of the useful tools outlined in the new FIA Strategic Plan, such as, urban inventory, increased plot density, and improved carbon and biomass estimates. Further, the 2018 Farm Bill called for "finding efficiencies in the program operations through the use of remote sensing technologies, where appropriate." We look forward to working with the Agency as this direction is implemented. There is a need to make FIA data more robust and more useful for emerging uses, such as accurate information regarding carbon stocks,

forest sustainability monitoring, wildlife habitat assessments, and much more. Given the increasing pressures facing our forests—from wildfire, insects and disease, and development—the FIA program is more important now than ever before. Funding the FIA program at \$83 million for FY20 would move toward providing for our growing data needs.

Sincerely,

Alabama Forestry Association	American Forest & Paper Association
American Forests	American Forest Foundation
American Woodcock Society	American Wood Council
Association of Consulting Foresters	Arkansas Forestry Association
Boise Cascade Company	BB&S Treated Lumber of New England
Ecological Society of America	Empire State Forest Products Association
Forestry Association of South Carolina	Florida Forestry Association
Fontana Wood Preserving	Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee
Forest Resources Association	Gross & Janes Co.
Hancock Natural Resource Group	Idaho Forest Group
IN Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society	Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association
Kentucky Forest Industries Association	L&C Carbon
Massachusetts Forest Alliance	McCord Tie and Timber, Inc.
Mississippi Forestry Association	National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Forest Service Retirees	National Association of State Foresters
National Audubon Society	National Wild Turkey Federation
Ohio Forestry Association, Inc.	Pennsylvania Forestry Association
Rayonier	Ruffed Grouse Society
SC Pole and Piling Inc	SFP
Society for the Protection of NH Forests	Society of American Foresters
Sustainable Forestry Initiative	Tank Fab Inc
The Hardwood Federation	The Westervelt Company
Treated Wood Council	Vermont Woodlands Association
Viance LLC	