

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2012

The Honorable Michael Simpson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Moran,

We are writing to express our strong support for the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program ("Community Forest Program") that was authorized in Title VIII, Section 8002 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. We respectfully request that you fully fund the President's proposed allocation of \$4 million for the Community Forest Program in the FY13 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

As authorized by Congress, the Community Forest Program will help local government entities, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations purchase forests for local ownership. This program will leverage precious federal dollars by awarding 50-50 matching grants through a nationally competitive process.

The Community Forest Program will prioritize projects that meet locally-identified community needs for natural resource protection, economic development, and public access. Local citizens will play a leading role in conservation, stewardship, and governance on these lands. This model of locally-led conservation has proven popular and effective all across America.

We respectfully request that the House Interior Appropriations Committee fully fund the President's proposed allocation of \$4 million for the Community Forest Program in FY13. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and please do not hesitate to contact any of us for more information.

Sincerely,



PETER F. WELCH
Member of Congress



CHARLES F. BASS
Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress