



February 10, 2009

The Honorable Senator Harry Reid Fax: 202-224-7327
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
 Reconciliation of differences between House and Senate
 legislation with regard to US Forest Service--State and
 Private Forestry

Dear Senator Reid:

I am writing to express deep concern about differences between the House (H.R.1) and Senate (S.336) economic recovery legislation regarding land restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, and other work to be performed on State and Private Forestlands. To ensure that the greatest number of jobs will be created in both rural and urban areas, funds allocated under State & Private Forestry authorities must be made available for a broad range of projects rather than be limited in scope and geography.

The House version (H.R.1) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Title VIII, The Forest Service, Wildland Fire Management) includes \$550M for “shovel-ready” activities including “**city forest enhancements**”. However, the Senate version (S.336) gives insufficient direction and authority to the Forest Service to fund city forest enhancements and other valuable cooperative forestry activities supporting immediate job creation.

We strongly urge you and your colleagues to include the following language, which appears in the House legislation:

Wildland Fire Management

*... and of which \$- - million is for State fire assistance hazardous fuels projects, volunteer fire assistance, cooperative forest health projects, **city forest enhancements**, and wood to energy grants on State and private lands...*

- Alliance for Community Trees
- American Forests
- American Nursery and Landscape Association
- American Planning Association
- American Public Works Association
- American Society of Consulting Arborists
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- The Davey Tree Expert Company
- International City/County Management Association
- International Society of Arboriculture
- Keep America Beautiful
- National Arbor Day Foundation
- National Association of State Foresters
- Society of American Foresters
- Society of Municipal Arborists
- Tree Care Industry of America
- TreeLink
- Utility Arborist Association
- US Conference of Mayors

The Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition (SUFC) is a group of national organizations advancing a unified urban forest agenda for our nation's communities.



Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition

Investing in city forest enhancements provides much needed jobs in the short term. Such jobs could include planting trees, conducting urban tree inventories and health assessments, utilizing wood waste, and responding to threats of insects and diseases. In the long term, city forest enhancements bring the nation closer to a longer-term post crisis solution by diversifying employment opportunities, meeting energy conservation goals, and providing a wide variety of environmental benefits.

The Case for Green Jobs in City Forests

The USDA Forest Service *Urban and Community Forestry Program* has documented at least \$283 million worth of shovel-ready projects to improve city forests. Not only would these projects provide immediate jobs, they would also realize tangible environmental improvement to cities nationwide. In California alone, the state has identified over \$65 million in unfunded projects that could commence in 90 days or less.

Urban forestry is a cost-efficient mechanism for job creation. A recent economic analysis conducted in California found that labor accounts for over 75% of the cost of growing, planting and maintaining city trees. Planting just 6 million shade trees in California cities would create 9,750 jobs. Maintaining 6 million trees over a 40-year life cycle would create another 5,050 jobs per year. Nationwide, American Forests estimates that 60 million shade trees could be planted in American cities over the next 10 years, resulting in 60,250 jobs per year.

Cities including Baltimore, New York, Boston, Denver, Seattle, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Indianapolis, Sacramento, San Francisco, Portland, Philadelphia, Charlotte and many others have pledged to plant millions of shade trees in urban areas. Many have created substantial management plans, which with funding could be implemented quickly.

By investing in public-benefit projects to enhance city forests, Congress would also sustain the survival of many small and family-owned businesses. Nursery sales and demand for landscaping and arboricultural services are down. Plant sales have been especially impacted by the decline in new housing starts. However, investing in city forests could boost nursery sales, require intensive labor, and provide longer-term post crisis solutions.

Thank you for your hard work on this important legislation. We hope you will consider the opportunity for job creation through investment in city forest enhancements.

Sincerely,
Sustainable Urban Forest Coalition
(Supporting organizations listed on page one)