

June XX, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lee and Chairman Westerman:

We, the undersigned organizations and businesses, represent the purchasers of federal timber sales from across the country. We are the partners and customers of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) timber programs. Collectively, we include the mills, loggers, and supply chains that help make active forest management of our federal lands possible while also helping to meet our nation's demand for building materials and other renewable wood products.

We are deeply grateful for your leadership to include provisions in the Reconciliation bill with the intent of supporting and strengthening the forest products industry, loggers, and related businesses and advancing the Trump Administration's timber policy priorities.

Like you, we believe the Reconciliation bill creates an unprecedented opportunity to revitalize and strengthen the forest products industry and rural communities; provide predictability and certainty for the private sector as stewards of our lands and resources; and support American workers and communities, American products, and the American taxpayer. We are writing to share some comments and concerns regarding specific provisions in the proposed legislation.

Federal Timber Targets

We strongly support language in the Senate Reconciliation bill that would require the Forest Service and BLM to annually increase timber sale volumes by a specific amount over the next ten years. This language and approach provides our industry with predictability and certainty – clarifying achievable, implementable, required volume increases to the federal timber supply now and into the future.

This language is also consistent with, and codifies the intent of, President Trump's Executive Order on the Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production to "increase domestic timber production to protect our national and economic security."

As federal timber purchasers, requiring specific timber supply outputs from federal lands with annual increases in the Reconciliation bill is our top priority and essential to the needs and

interests of the forest sector and rural communities. This provision will create revenues for the Treasury; help support and grow American manufacturing; sustain and create private sector jobs; and revitalize rural communities and county governments dependent on federal timber receipts.

Long-Term Contracts

The House and Senate Reconciliation bills include provisions that would *require* the Forest Service and BLM to offer long-term, 20-year contracts. We appreciate the intent of this section to create predictability to the forest products sector, loggers, and communities by seeking to incentivize private investment in new or additional milling capacity.

We share the same goals. We would like to work with you to ensure this potential new contracting tool achieves your intent and supports the forest products sector, workers, communities, counties, the Forest Service and BLM. However, as written, the long-term contracting language requirements would have negative, unintended consequences and are harmful to our interests and goals.

Both the House and Senate language require all revenues from the long-term contracts to be deposited in the Treasury. This means county governments would not receive their proportion of timber receipts to support essential services like law enforcement and education. We know that you and the Administration have prioritized, are focused on, and are committed to the economic health and resiliency of our rural communities. The current 20-year contract language in the Reconciliation bill would harm rural and timber-dependent counties by redirecting revenues from county coffers.

Additionally, the diversion of long-term contract receipts to the Treasury would divert resources from the Forest Service and BLM, which use some of these monies to fund reforestation activities and plan and execute future timber sales. Like you, we believe federal land management agencies should be more financially self-sustaining through active management. The 20-year contract language in the Reconciliation bill would undermine this goal and force the agencies to be more dependent on Congressionally appropriated dollars to increase timber outputs.

Finally, 20-year contracts could be disruptive and anti-competitive in healthy markets throughout the country. Potentially “locking up” 20-years of timber volume of an entire national forest or district to a single bidder would harm competition, markets, and prices where multiple mills, contractors, and private parties have interests. Long-term contracts can be a useful tool in specific circumstances and in specific geographies, but *requiring* them and diverting the revenues away from county governments and federal agency budgets could have negative consequences by undermining timber supply certainty and the viability of existing milling infrastructure.

For these reasons, we recommend that the long-term contracting language be removed from the Reconciliation bill so that we can work with you and the Administration to meet our mutual goals, and the needs of the forest products industry, loggers, and county governments.

Again, thank you for your strong leadership on federal lands and forest management issues. We are eager to work with you and your colleagues to advance additional reforms that capitalize on this historic moment to increase federal timber supplies consistent with the President's Executive Order, create thousands of family-wage jobs stewarding our federal forests, generate revenues for the Treasury, improve the health of our federal forests, and protect our national and economic security.

Sincerely,

American Forest Resource Council
Associated Oregon Loggers
Douglas Timber Operators
Hampton Lumber
Minnesota Forest Industries
Minnesota Timber Producers Association
Montana Wood Products Association
Murphy Company
Rosboro Company LLC
Starfire Lumber Co.
Stimson Lumber Company
Swanson Group
Trinity River Lumber Company
Washington Contract Loggers Association
Western Forest Products

Cc:
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