



March 4, 2012

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

The Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition (SUFC) represents a national coalition of city managers, diverse associations, nursery and landscape professionals, national and community nonprofits, urban planners, public works professionals, arborists, utility professionals, foresters, water quality experts, scientists, and others nationwide. Working together since 2004, this array of professionals monitor, care and advocate for urban trees and green infrastructure. As you consider FY13 appropriations for Interior Environment and Related agencies, we collectively ask for your support of the following:

- ***\$31.3 million for the US Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program.*** Urban forests are vital to creating and maintaining healthy, livable communities of all sizes. Trees in urban areas are a key component of sustainable green infrastructure and provide quantifiable ecosystem benefits to the 84% of Americans who live in metropolitan areas. Delivered in close partnership with State Forestry Agencies, the U&CF program assists cities, suburbs, and towns to maximize tree canopy and resulting environmental services. In FY11, the U&CF program delivered technical, financial, educational, and research assistance to 7,172 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and affiliated Pacific Island nations. The program reached nearly 195 million Americans (i.e. over 60% of the U.S. population) and leveraged an additional \$30 million in state and local support. *At this funding level, we also support the FY13 budget request to continue implementing strategic landscape-scale demonstration projects promoting energy conservation through tree planting.*
- ***\$112 million for the USDA Forest Service Forest Health Management Program, including \$49 million applied on cooperative lands.***<sup>1</sup> Exotic pests and invasive species are among the greatest threats to urban (and rural) forests. These pests have the potential to displace and/or decimate native trees, shrubs and other vegetation types in both urban and rural forests as well as generate fuel for wildfire. Funding for the Forest Health Program supports activities related to prevention, suppression, and eradication of insects, diseases, and plants as well as conducting forest health monitoring through pest surveys.

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<sup>1</sup> In support of forest health management on federal and cooperative lands as proposed to be funded out of State and Private Forestry in FY13.

- ***\$18 million for urban natural resources research through Forest Service Research and Development.*** This request is consistent with the recommendations of the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council to increase the Forest Service's investment to \$24 million for urban natural resources research by the year 2015. This program pioneered research on the effects of urban trees on air quality and quantified the effects of trees on temperature reduction, removal of air pollutants, reduced energy consumption, and the role of urban trees in reducing green house gas emissions.
- ***\$4.7 million for EPA's Urban Waters Federal Partnership.*** No ecological boundaries separate urban, community and rural forests - and *all* forests play vital roles in delivering clean water to communities of every size. Urban and rural forests offer fiscally-sound green solutions to the management of stormwater, water storage, groundwater recharge and pollutant reduction. EPA's Urban Waters Partnership brings together multiple Federal agencies (including the Forest Service) to support stewardship and local restoration efforts to improve urban watersheds and accelerate water quality improvements by promoting green infrastructure, volunteer monitoring, and outreach to communities.

Thriving communities have a foundation of healthy and sustainable green infrastructure. Urban forests are integral to any community investing in itself and encouraging economic growth, active citizens and a cleaner environment. Accordingly, we urge you to maintain current funding levels as you consider FY13 appropriations for the above programs.

We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important request. For further information or questions, please contact Gerry Gray, American Forests at 202-737-1944 or [ggray@amfor.org](mailto:ggray@amfor.org).

Sincerely yours,

***Cc: Members of the Senate Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee***