



National Association of State Foresters Statement about Senate Appropriations Proposed Budget
Positive Aspects of Proposed Budget Overshadowed By Cuts to Critical Forestry Programs

WASHINGTON (November 21, 2017)—The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) responded today with a mixed reaction to the Senate Committee on Appropriations' proposed budget for the USDA Forest Service.

While State Foresters appreciate the proposal's support for federal lands management and a wildfire funding fix, proposed funding cuts to state and private forestry programs will hurt the nation's most at-risk forests and communities. Now is not the time to cut the capacity of state forestry agencies to help landowners manage forests, clean up after storms, and protect communities from catastrophic wildfires.

"State Foresters are pleased to see additional authorities and streamlining to manage the nation's federal, state, and private forests. However we are very concerned about the proposed reductions in funding for core programs and the impact of those proposed cuts on forests and communities across the nation," said NASF President and Oklahoma State Forester George Geissler.

"Positive aspects of the Senate budget proposal include expansion of the Good Neighbor Authority, which allows state professionals to help manage adjacent National Forests; streamlining of the planning process for forest management on federal lands; and elimination of the need to borrow funds from non-suppression funds to fight wildfires. However, the proposal does not address the long term erosion of the agency's non-wildfire suppression budget and its impacts on other programs of critical concern to the nation's State Foresters.

"State Foresters are disappointed that this budget proposal cuts funding to state and private forestry programs serving the 60 percent of the nation's forests and delivering nearly 90 percent of the nation's wood supply. Wildlife habitat and clean water are highly dependent on well-managed forests. Given the state of America's forests, cuts to the Forest Stewardship and Forest Health Programs make no sense," said Geissler.

Insects, disease, and catastrophic wildfires know no boundaries and spread across all ownerships. A recent NASF analysis shows that a forest landowner with a Forest Stewardship Program management plan is nearly three times more likely to actively manage his or her forest for wildlife and watershed benefits and keep the property intact rather than sell it, as compared with a forest landowner without a plan.

"State Foresters are especially disappointed in the dramatic cut to the Urban and Community Forestry Program. Rural communities across the nation depend upon this core funding to enhance their livability. In addition this program helps reinvigorate inner cities. Strengthening rural America and revitalizing America's inner cities and communities are priorities for the Presidential Administration, and healthy trees are one of the best infrastructure investments. The health benefits, energy savings, and positive impact on business districts in small communities are well-documented," said Geissler.

State Foresters are additionally frustrated by the lack of increase in investments in the State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance Programs.

"While federal wildfire suppression costs continue to increase dramatically, federal assistance to these programs has either decreased or remained flat over the past decade. States and volunteers provide a



majority of the nation's resources for initial attack, frequently responding to wildfires affecting federal forests. Investing in America's initial attack capabilities is key to decrease wildfire suppression costs," said Geissler.

The nation's forests are a national asset and State Foresters urge Congress to provide more support for state forestry agency professionals and private landowners to adequately manage this valuable resource and protect our communities.

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Established in 1920, the National Association of State Foresters is a non-profit organization composed of the directors of forestry agencies in the states, territories and the District of Columbia of the United States. State foresters manage and protect state and private forests, which encompass two-thirds of the nation's forests.

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