Alliance for Community Trees
American Forest Foundation
City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation Bureau of Forestry
City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works, Forestry Division
Davey Institute
International Maple Syrup Institute
National Association of State Foresters
Natural Biodiversity
The Nature Conservancy
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc.
Partnership for Saving Threatened Forests
The Pennsylvania Game Commission
Purdue University, Department of Entomology
Society of Municipal Arborists
The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Georgia, Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health

April 7, 2009

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
Chairperson
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable George Voinovich
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriation for the USDA Forest Service

Dear Chairperson Feinstein and Ranking Member Voinovich:

We urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to appropriate adequate funding for the USDA Forest Service to manage non-native insects and plant diseases that threaten America's forests. We recommend an FY2010 appropriation of $140 million for the USDA Forest Service Forest Health Management Program. This level is about $17 million above the current level of funding. In addition, we ask that you provide an increase of $3 million above the FY08 appropriations level for the "Invasives R&D" line item within the Forest Service Research program.

Our proposed funding levels would maintain at approximately current levels research aimed at improving detection and control methods for the emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, sudden oak death (also called the phytophthora leaf and stem blight pathogen), gypsy moth, and other non-native forest pests and diseases. Funding at our recommended level would also allow expanded research on the *Sirex* woodwasp, which poses a serious threat to pine resources across the continent.

Our proposed significant increase in funding for the Forest Health Protection program is intended to allow expanding that program so that it may address several newly detected pests (such as the "1000-canker" disease killing black walnuts and the goldspotted oak borer in southern California) while simultaneously increasing efforts targeting the Asian longhorned beetle and maintaining programs that help contain the sudden oak death pathogen, emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, *Sirex* woodwasp, laurel wilt disease, gypsy moth, wiliwili gall wasp, and ohia rust.

The Forest Health program provides vital expertise in forest pests' biology and detection and management methodology that is crucial to the success of pest eradication and containment programs implemented by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. As these forest pests are detected in new areas, the importance of the Forest Service's contribution rises. A particularly significant expansion is needed for Forest Health programs targeting the Asian longhorned beetle as a result of the detection in 2008 of a well-established and large infestation in Worcester, Massachusetts. This infestation places the Asian longhorned beetle on the very edge of the highly vulnerable northern hardwood forests reaching from New England into Minnesota. These forests support hardwood timber, maple syrup, and autumn foliage tourism industries as well as important biological and watershed values. The Forest Health program must significantly increase its funding for detection and control methods, which in recent years have received only $200,000.

The USDA Forest Service has the lead responsibility for detecting and responding to any outbreaks of sudden oak death in the hardwood forests of the East. These detection programs must not be halted as infected plants continue to appear in eastern states as a result of the movement of infected nursery plants.

The emerald ash borer has now been detected in nine states. The Forest Service's Forest Health Protection program provides expertise in detecting this elusive insect, in developing more effective tools to curtail its spread, and in advising landowners on how to respond to the threat. For example, the Forest Service helps to fund a website maintained by the Continental Forest Dialogue (www.dontmovefirewood.org) in order to educate the public not to transport possibly infested wood that can spread pests. It is vitally important that the Forest Service effort targeting this insect not be reduced.

Finally, the Forest Health Management Program needs adequate funding to expand its Early Detection project. This program has been responsible for detecting more than a dozen introduced insects, including two which threaten the economically important pine forests of the Southeast: the *Sirex* woodwasp and Mediterranean pine beetle. The detection program now covers all states on a three-year rotation. It now must develop and deploy methodologies to detect the highly damaging wood-boring beetles.

The agency bearing the principal responsibility for eradicating newly introduced forest pests is not the USDA Forest Service, but rather the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

(APHIS), an agency under the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Appropriations subcommittee. The USDA Forest Service plays a critical support role by providing both management expertise and critical research – in close coordination with APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine and through cooperative funding agreements with state forestry, state departments of agriculture and state Land Grant Universities.

Nevertheless, the Subcommittee cannot achieve its goal of protecting the Nation's forests' health as long as funding shortfalls undermine USDA APHIS eradication programs. We encourage the Subcommittee to work with the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee to find ways to increase funding for forest pest line items in the USDA APHIS Emerging Plant Pest account.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Bendick, Director, Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy

Robert K. Davies, New York State Forester, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Drue DeBerry, Senior Vice President - Conservation, American Forest Foundation

Dr. G. Keith Douce, Co-Director, Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health, and Professor of Entomology, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, University of Georgia

Jay Farrell, Executive Director, National Association of State Foresters

Gary Gaudette, President, International Maple Syrup Institute

Michael A. Girard, President, North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc.

Fred Hain, Director, Partnership for Saving Threatened Forests

Dan Hartman, President, Society of Municipal Arborists

Joseph J. McCarthy, Senior City Forester, Bureau of Forestry, City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation

Cornelius B. Murphy, Jr., Ph.D., President, The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Anand B. Persad, Ph.D., B.C.E., Regional Technical Advisor, Davey Institute

Carl G. Roe, Executive Director, The Pennsylvania Game Commission

Kristin Sewak, Director, Natural Biodiversity

David B. Sivyer, Forestry Services Manager, Forestry Division, City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works

Alice Ewen Walker, Executive Director, Alliance for Community Trees

Phyllis N. Windle, Director, Invasive Species, Union of Concerned Scientists

Steve Yaninek, Professor and Head, Department of Entomology, Purdue University