



California State Association of Counties
1100 K Street, Suite 101
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Rural County Representatives of California
1215 K Street, Suite 1650
Sacramento, CA 95814

July 31, 2013

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Public Lands
and Environmental Regulation
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Public Lands
and Environmental Regulation
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Hastings and Bishop and Ranking Members DeFazio and Grijalva:

On behalf of California's counties that are represented by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we are writing to share our views regarding the *Restoring Healthy Forests for Healthy Communities Act* (HR 1526).

As you know, the legislation would require the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a "Forest Reserve Revenue Area" within each unit of the National Forest Service. USDA would have a fiduciary obligation to produce a minimum amount of commercial timber in these Revenue Areas for the financial benefit of local counties. CSAC and RCRC are concerned, however, that a system based on timber receipts alone could result in significantly less funding to counties in California, particularly if USDA is unable to produce its annual requirement. Accordingly, the legislation should be amended to ensure that counties are appropriately compensated should USDA fail, for whatever reason, to reach its intended revenue target.

We are also concerned that the provisions that seek to expedite the Federal environmental review process on proposed timber projects, as well as those that specify how impacts to

endangered species are to be considered, are unlikely to garner broad support in Congress. Therefore, we encourage the Committee to work in a bipartisan manner to ensure that the environmental review process can be completed in a timely and cost-effective manner, without compromising the protection of the natural environment.

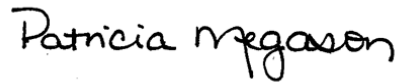
Finally, it is imperative that support for county services and rural schools continue until any proposed new revenue system is fully implemented. We are encouraged that the proposed legislation includes a temporary extension of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program and would urge you to ensure that any such extension is sufficiently funded and allows adequate time for counties to adjust to a new payment structure.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues. Should you have any questions regarding our position or would like additional information, please contact Karen Keene, CSAC Director of Federal Affairs at (916) 327-7500 ext. 511 or Patricia Megason, RCRC Executive Vice President at (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



Karen Keene, CSAC
Director of Federal Affairs



Patricia Megason, RCRC
Executive Vice President

cc: Representative Tom McClintock
Representative Doug LaMalfa
Representative Grace Napolitano
Representative Jim Costa
Representative Tony Cardenas
Representative Jared Huffman
Representative Raul Ruiz
Representative Alan Lowenthal