



Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition

February 22, 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Norm Dicks
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Feinstein, Chairman Dicks, Ranking Member Alexander and Ranking Member Simpson:

The Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition (SUFC) represents city mayors, community nonprofits, national associations, nursery and landscape professionals, urban planners, city managers, public works professionals, arborists, utility professionals, foresters, scientists, and others nationwide. Collectively, we are asking for your support for a \$100 million appropriation for the US Forest Service's *Urban and Community Forestry* program for FY 2011.

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 80% of Americans who live in urban areas. Urban forests enhance air and water quality, reduce energy use, enhance property values, and provide an array of health and wellness benefits to people. Creating and maintaining a healthy tree canopy also creates a substantial demand for green collar jobs in a sector poised for rapid growth.

Since its expansion under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1990, the Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program has been a catalyst and important technical advisor to promoting healthy forests in our communities. 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 addition, the U&CF program provides critical assistance to help communities manage risk, respond to storms and disturbance, and contain threats from invasive pests.

The U&CF program delivers technical, financial, educational, and research assistance to communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and eight U.S. territories. In 2008, U&CF provided assistance to 7,139 communities, home to over 177 million people. Urban and community forests make a significant contribution to the quality of

life in communities across the country, and the Forest Service brings an impressive array of tools, resources, and expertise to promote urban and community forests.

This program also 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 and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

The SUFC believes the first critical step to help communities capture the benefits of trees is appropriating the first \$40 million in FY 2011 for the cooperative program. This investment will help deliver the baseline technical, financial, research and educational services which help communities in every state assess, manage, and optimize the benefits of trees in urbanized landscapes. We find that there is the potential to build upon the traditional U&CF program by investing the remaining \$60 million in areas related to:

- Volunteer tree-planting and care initiatives;
- Assessments of the health of urban forest resources; and
- Grants to address energy conservation and air and water quality issues through urban and community tree planting initiatives.

The SUFC also supports investing \$16 million for urban natural resources research through Forest Service Research and Development..

Urban forests are integral to any community striving to reinvest in itself, encourage active, healthy citizens, and create a healthier and more sustainable environment with smart green infrastructure. For further information or questions, please contact Alice Walker Ewen, Alliance for Community Trees at 301-277-0040 or alice@actrees.org.

Sincerely yours,

Alliance for Community Trees

American Forests

American Nursery and Landscape Association

American Planning Association

American Public Works Association

American Society of Consulting Arborists

American Society of Landscape Architects

International City/County Management Association

International Society of Arboriculture

Keep America Beautiful

National Arbor Day Foundation

National Association of State Foresters

Society of Municipal Arborists

Tree Care Industry Association

TreeLink

Utility Arborist Association

US Conference of Mayors

Cc: *House Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee*
Senate Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee