

American Forests Analysis and Recommendations for Funding for the Forest Service in the Senate Economic Stimulus Package

1/16/09

On Thursday January 15th, 2009, the House of Representatives passed the long anticipated Economic Stimulus Package. This package included several pieces for the USDA Forest Service.

Summary of \$ for the Forest Service in the House Economic Stimulus Package

Capital Improvement and Maintenance \$650,000,000

- For reconstruction, capital improvement, decommissioning, and maintenance of forest roads, and bridges and trails
- Alternative energy technologies, energy efficiency enhancements, and deferred maintenance at Federal facilities
- Remediation of abandoned mine sites, removal of fish passage barriers, and other critical habitat, forest improvement and watershed enhancement projects on Federal lands and waters

Wildfire Hazard Reduction \$850,000,000

- \$300,000,000 for hazardous fuels reduction, forest health, wood to energy grants, and rehabilitation and restoration activities on Federal Lands
- \$550,000,000 for State fire assistance hazardous fuels reduction projects, volunteer fire assistance, cooperative forest health projects, city forest enhancements, and wood to energy grants on State and private lands

American Forests' Recommendations

American Forests views the numbers in the House version of the Stimulus Package as representing a minimum investment and that the Senate should at least maintain these numbers. Additionally, we would like to see the language in the House bill regarding specific funding priorities retained, particularly related to City Forest enhancements.

Ideally, the Senate could boost the numbers from the House version to better respond to the need stated in Forest Service's economic stimulus recommendation documents. We understand that the task of working under a constrained budget means that some priorities must be scaled back. With this in mind, we have made a few recommendations for what we believe would be minima, but sufficient levels above the House numbers for the Forest Service to carry out greatly needed work on the landscape while concurrently creating much needed, quality jobs.

State fire assistance hazardous fuels reduction projects, volunteer fire assistance, cooperative forest health projects, city forest enhancements, and wood to energy grants on State and private lands

House Bill: \$550,000

Forest Service Stated Need: \$1,349,300,000

(This number is determined by American Forests approximately because the House bill combines several activities that are parsed out in different places in the Forest Service documents as follows: \$600 million for nonfederal lands hazardous fuels reduction, \$283.3 millions for city forests, and \$466 for wood to energy programs. Volunteer fire assistance is not specifically parsed out with a separate line item in the forest service numbers so does not have a separate number indicated in the breakdown here)

American Forests' recommendation: \$903,000,000

(This number was determined as follows: \$600 millions for nonfederal lands hazardous fuels reduction, \$146 million for City Forests, \$97 for Wood to Energy grants, and \$60 million for Forest Inventory and Analysis)

Hazardous fuels reduction, forest health, wood to energy grants, and rehabilitation and restoration activities on Federal Lands

House Bill: \$300,000,000

Forest Service Stated Need: \$2,755,000,000

American Forests' recommendation: \$500,000

Capital Improvement and Maintenance for reconstruction, capital improvement, decommissioning, and maintenance of forest roads, and bridges and trails; Alternative energy technologies, energy efficiency enhancements, and deferred maintenance at Federal facilities; Remediation of abandoned mine sites, removal of fish passage barriers, and other critical habitat, forest improvement and watershed enhancement projects on Federal lands and waters

House Bill: \$650,000,000

Forest Service Stated Need: This number is unclear as the items indicated in the House Bill are parsed out completely differently than in the Forest Service stimulus documents making an estimate we make as to what the Forest Service number might be pretty meaningless.

American Forests Recommendation: \$650,000,000