

Senate Outreach

Support City Forest Enhancements in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Date

The Honorable First & Last Name

Address

Address

Re: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
US Forest Service – State and Private Forest Lands – City Forest Enhancements

Dear Senator _____:

I am writing to urge your support for increased action in the economic stimulus to carry out important land and resource management projects.

In particular, ORGANIZATION supports amending the Senate bill to provide \$550 million for land restoration on State and Private Forest lands, of which we ask that \$150 million be directed to *city forest enhancements*. To deliver projects quickly, we urge a waiver of the typical cost-share requirements traditionally required by the Urban and Community Forestry program.

The House bill passed last month provided \$550 million for State and Private Forest lands and included *city forest enhancements* among the many valuable stated stewardship activities supported through the stimulus. We believe the final legislation passed by Congress should include similar language in support of city forest enhancements.

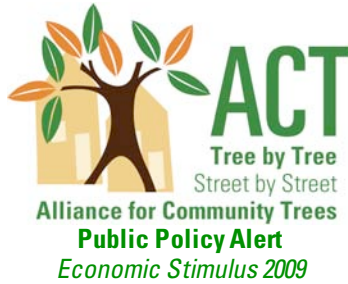
In (STATE OR CITY) alone, we have documented \$_____ million of unfunded city forest enhancements which could be jump started within 90 days. The (STATE OR CITY) has an ambitious plan to *plant ## trees by ## Yr. (if your state or city has a plan, such as a Million Trees goal or other initiative, state it here.)* Investment in this important green infrastructure will improve community health and provide jobs at a variety of skill levels to urban residents.

Well-managed urban forests reduce fire risk in the wildland-urban interface, enhance health and quality of life for people, provide green job opportunities for urban youth and adults, and support the small businesses that make up the nursery and landscape industry.

City forest enhancements funding should include:

- **Community Assistance Grants for City Forests**
Grants to local governments, nonprofits, small business, and non-traditional educational/training programs to: enhance and restore urban forest infrastructure and tree canopies, mitigate negative stormwater and heat island issues, reduce heat/air conditioning energy consumption, target





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underserved communities, generate outreach to attract new workers to the tree care industry, provide key job skill training, and generate a financial return from urban forest wood waste and products. Grants should target underserved communities in cities and towns and provide green jobs requiring a wide range of skill levels.

- **Urban Forest Assessment and Monitoring**
Inventory and data collection of urban forests in all 50 states will provide a national picture of the condition, structure, function, and value of the urban forest resource. This baseline data is key to effectively assessing and implementing the best urban forest management practices.

It is also important to provide robust funding for green infrastructure (trees and vegetation) projects focusing on storm water management and urban parks and trails. City forests provide a natural water infiltration system that reduces stormwater run-off pollution and sewer overflow. Urban parks and trails provide many services to all urban residents from recreation to transportation.

These stimulus investment recommendations can provide an immediate boost in diverse new jobs as well as career ladder opportunities into the arboriculture and green industry. In addition, these dollars will provide a boost to local government and nonprofit job growth opportunities as tree care businesses, nonprofits, and local government collaborate in many communities.

The (YOUR ORG NAME) believes the USDA Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program is an excellent existing system for distributing one-time stimulus funds to the field for immediate implementation. We recommend Congress include a temporary suspension of cost-share requirements for these stimulus projects.

Healthy urban forests and adequate green spaces in our cities are vital to the economic, social and environmental health of communities. Investment in these projects provides both a short-term stimulus boost and on-going long-term benefits.

Thank you for considering the central role urban forests play in our cities and economy.

Sincerely,

Name
Title

