



## MONTANA SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

### STATE SOCIETY CHAPTERS

EASTERN MONTANA CHAPTER

FLATHEAD CHAPTER

LIBBY CHAPTER

MISSOULA CHAPTER

STUDENT CHAPTER - THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

February 24, 2015

RE: Transfer of Federal Lands to States

Dear Governor Bullock,

On behalf of the nearly 300 Montana Society of American Foresters members, the Montana SAF Forest Policy Committee provides the following statement for your consideration during deliberations and discussions on the topic of Transfer of Federal Lands to States.

The solution must be crafted by Congress and progress is possible, however, the Transfer of Federal Lands to States topic is difficult and complex which distracts from the focus on the root causes of the problems surrounding our Federal Forestry Professional colleagues that are working diligently to implement much needed, science based treatments. Therefore, Montana SAF Forest Policy Committee does not support current actions to advance the Transfer of all Federal Lands to States. Our support is for full implementation of the Farm Bill forestry provisions and collaborative efforts with other interests to assist Congress in developing beneficial bi-partisan legislation.

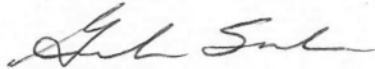
As the world's largest organization of Natural Resource Professionals, SAF is chartered to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry for the benefit of society. SAF is the accrediting body of professional and technical forestry colleges and schools in our nation, and also is responsible for certification of professional foresters.

Our national office, based in Bethesda, MD is engaged with Congressional Staff and Committee Staff on a wide variety of natural resource issues through Policy Director, John Barnwell 1-301-897-8720 x 300. We were very involved in issues such as the 2014 Farm Bill Forestry Titles, the non-point pollution issue on forest roads, forestry research through Forest Inventory and Analysis program at USFS Research Stations, Appropriations, and much more. Regular testimony by SAF in Committee hearings is always appreciated by those committee members due to our credible science based background and balanced membership. Position statements are produced every year by National SAF Committee on Forest Policy. These position statements are often used as the basis for testimony and also set the direction for all individual State Chapter Forest Policy efforts and the Montana SAF Forest Policy Committee for consistency across our broad membership.

Currently, our National SAF Policy Director, John Barnwell is very interested and desires to get the conversation initiated on forest reform for nationwide reform on all federal lands and not only for specific areas. SAF has a long history of collaborative efforts with a variety of interests to achieve common goals. For example, SAF is an active member of the CFLRA Coalition for continued appropriations to accomplish large landscape level stewardship and restoration projects. Our understanding is that the National SAF Committee on Forest Policy will have increased discussions this year on the topic on forest reform. The first of which was the Fire Suppression Bill which would treat catastrophic fire seasons more like FEMA for natural disasters. Additionally, there is significant Congressional interest and efforts ongoing to develop forest reform legislation to increase the pace and scale of stewardship and restoration treatments on our Nation's Federal Forested Lands. SAF is engaged in these discussions in Washington, D.C. as well as within individual states and strongly agrees that our National Forests are severely overgrown and not ecologically sustainable in their current condition to provide long term benefits ecologically, socially or economically for the public good.

Montana Society of American Foresters Forest Policy Committee and our National SAF Policy Director would be open to any follow up conversation on Forest Reform. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me at your convenience or visit with John Barnwell in our National SAF Office.

Sincerely,



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