

**Access Fund * American Canoe Association * American Forests * American Forest Foundation *
American Hiking Society * American Whitewater *
Appalachian Mountain Club * Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies *
Eastern Forest Partnership * Eastern Mountain Sports * Highlands Coalition *
International Mountain Bicycling Association * Land Trust Alliance * Lyme Timber *
Molpus Woodlands Group * National Alliance of Forest Owners *
National Association of State Foresters * National Wildlife Refuge Association *
Open Space Institute * Outdoor Alliance * Outdoor Industry Association *
Pacific Forest Trust * Plum Creek Timber Company *
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests *
Stimson Lumber * Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership * The Conservation Fund *
The Forestland Group LLC * The Nature Conservancy * The Trust for Public Land *
The Wilderness Society * Trout Unlimited * Washington Trails Association *
Winter Wildlands Alliance**

Dear Senator:

Our organizations – representing business owners, forest landowners, sportsmen and women, outdoor recreation enthusiasts and conservationists – urge your opposition to Amendment #2313, introduced by Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT). Lee Amendment #2313 to the Senate Farm Bill would permanently eliminate the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), a highly successful Cooperative Forestry program funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The Forest Legacy Program is a voluntary, grant-based program for states and has delivered tremendous benefits to the public since it was first authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill, leading to the conservation of over 2.2 million acres of working forest lands in 49 states.

Lee Amendment #2313 should be defeated for a number of important reasons:

- The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is a flexible and effective tool that supports our nation’s forest-based economy—particularly in rural areas. According to the National Association of Forest Owners, U.S. forests support more than 2.9 million jobs and contribute \$115 billion towards the GDP.
- This program has led to the conservation of over 2.2 million acres of working forest lands, primarily through conservation easement purchases, with almost 50 percent of project costs leveraged from other non-federal sources. FLP is a voluntary conservation program that emphasizes federal-state and public-private partnerships to achieve the common goals of protecting and maintaining forest jobs, recreational access, wildlife habitat and clean water.
- The FLP provides grants to states for locally-driven, collaborative forest conservation projects of their choosing. *Every state* except North Dakota has now voluntarily enrolled in the program and has received funding. Many states have used these grant funds to create new wildlife management areas, enhance state forests, and permanently ensure public access to recreational trails.
- Each year, states request between \$150 million to \$200 million from the Forest Legacy Program, though annual appropriations have averaged less than \$57 million over the last five years. For the current round of funding affected by the Lee Amendment, Fiscal Year 2013, 39 states submitted over \$168 million in grant requests for 253,000 acres of FLP projects.
- The FLP, which is funded through LWCF, does not use taxpayer dollars. It is **already paid for** using a very small percentage of oil drilling receipts. The LWCF program was created to offset the depletion of natural resources offshore that belong to all Americans.

By eliminating the Forest Legacy Program, the Lee Amendment #2313 would cut off funding to landowners - including forest products and timber companies - who are working with states to protect their economically important forests. This amendment could limit public access to forest lands for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking, snowshoeing, paddling, camping and other forms of outdoor recreation. For these reasons, we urge you to oppose Lee Amendment #2313 to the Senate Farm Bill.