

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 5, 2007

The Honorable John Spratt  
Chairman  
Committee on the Budget  
207 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
B71 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

We are writing to urge you to oppose the Administration's recent proposal to sell vast tracts of our national forests and to find alternative funding for any extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act in the Fiscal Year 2008 Congressional Budget Resolution. This proposal is similar to one offered last year by the Administration but rejected by Congress.


The Administration's FY 2008 Budget proposes to sell some 270,000 acres of National Forest System lands in 35 states and use half the revenues to fund a four-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. This program provides support to rural schools across America, but we strongly oppose the false choice embodied in the Administration's proposal.


Selling parcels of our national forests provides at best a temporary solution to funding the Secure Rural Schools program. Furthermore, this proposal would set a dangerous precedent if enacted. Congress should not develop the habit of selling treasured public lands to the highest bidder as a means of temporarily plugging gaps in the budget.

Our national forests provide recreation for millions of citizens a year in the form of hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, boating, skiing and enjoying the serenity of the outdoors. The forests are also important for watershed purposes and provide habitat for thousands of species. If we sell this land it will be gone forever, and we will still not have found a permanent source of funding for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

We urge you to craft a budget that protects our public lands and finds alternative funding sources for any extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

Sincerely,

  
Ben Chandler  
Member of Congress

  
Ric Keller  
Member of Congress

Gary Ackerman  
Gary Ackerman

Kenn Hulsho  
Kenn Hulsho

Howard D. Berman  
Howard Berman

Walter B. Jones  
Walter Jones

Corrine Brown  
Corrine Brown

Dennis L. Kucinich  
Dennis Kucinich

Russ Carnahan  
Russ Carnahan

Tammy Baldwin  
Tammy Baldwin

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Wm. Lacy Clay

Rick Boucher  
Rick Boucher

John Conyers  
John Conyers

Ginny Brown-Waite  
Ginny Brown-Waite

Jo Ann Emerson  
Jo Ann Emerson

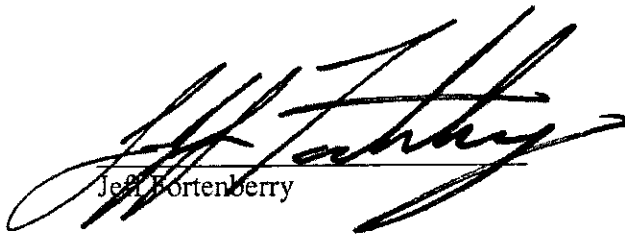
Julia Carson  
Julia Carson

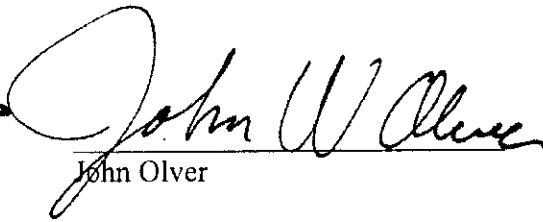
Barney Frank  
Barney Frank


Emanuel Cleaver  
Emanuel Cleaver

Maurice Hinchey  
Maurice Hinchey

Keith Ellison  
Keith Ellison

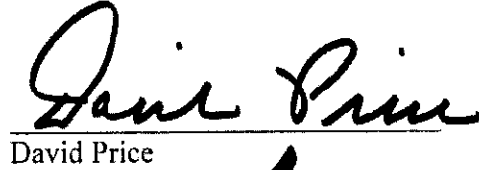
  
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John Olver

  
Robin Hayes

  
Donald Payne

  
Mike Honda

  
David Price

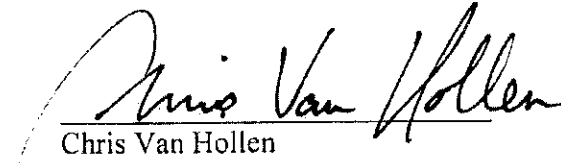
  
Jay Inslee

  
Chris Shays

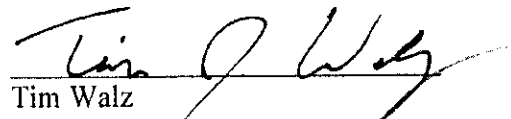
  
Steve Kagen

  
Fortney "Pete" Stark

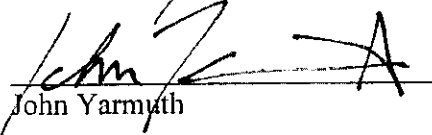
  
Barbara Lee

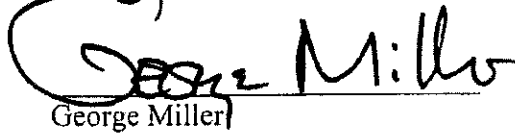
  
Chris Van Hollen

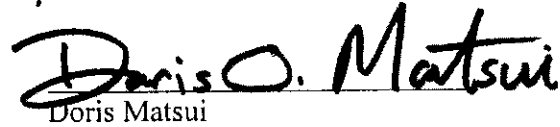
  
Carolyn Maloney

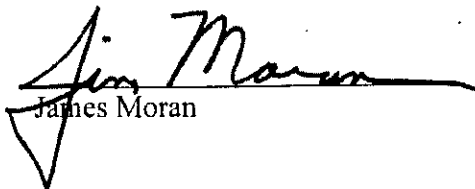
  
Tim Walz

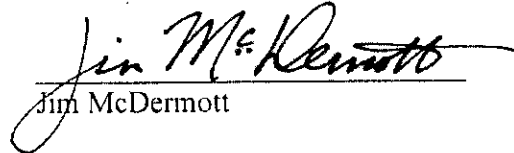
  
Betty McCollum


  
John Yarmuth


  
George Miller

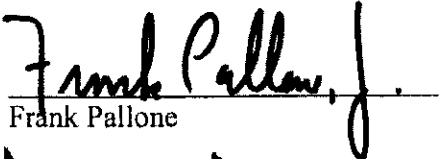
  
Doris Matsui

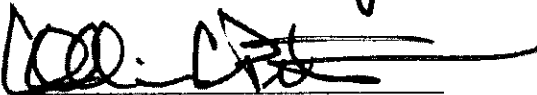
  
James Moran

  
Jim McDermott


  
Dennis Moore


  
James Oberstar

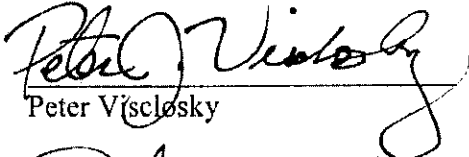
  
Frank Pallone

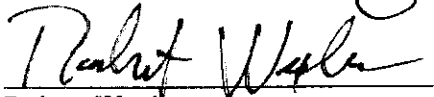
  
Collin Peterson

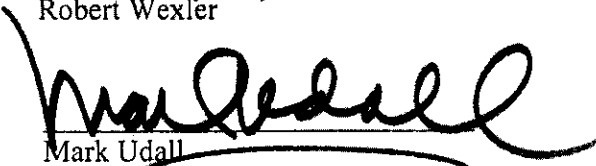
  
Adam Schiff

  
Ike Skelton

  
Tom Udall

  
Peter Visclosky

  
Robert Wexler

  
Mark Udall

  
David Wu