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February 17, 2006

Senator Diane Feinstein  
Rm. 331, Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Subject: The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act of 2005

Dear Senator Feinstein:

The Northern California Society of American Foresters supports the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act of 2005, HR 4200. This legislation would give federal forest managers the tools to quickly initiate recovery and restoration programs after catastrophic events such as wildfire and hurricanes. The current process that allows for delays to “run out the clock” until economic values are lost or diminished has created a huge backlog of reforestation and restoration projects in our own home state of California. The California region of the U.S. Forest Service estimates that there are over 84,000 acres (131 square miles) of severely burned or damaged forest in need of reforestation and restoration in California alone.

Senator, your past record in support of progressive legislation on forest management issues such as the Quincy Library Group, has given our membership hope that you will work with Congressman Walden to help craft a Senate version of his bill. NorCal SAF believes that your leadership is vital to move this issue forward and begin restoring severely damaged forests for the benefit of future generations of Californians.

As a country wealthy in natural resources our laws should demonstrate that we value healthy forests and recognize that quick action after catastrophic events is necessary for restoration. NorCal SAF believes we need to adopt legislation to assure the recovery of trees killed or damaged by fire, flood, hurricane, or other disaster and the immediate initiation of reforestation and restoration actions. California has numerous examples on private and public lands where quick restoration actions after a fire have create a healthy forest and also many examples where no action has left a legacy of brush, dead trees and lost opportunities.

Individual National Forests can prepare standards and guidelines in advance of catastrophic events. Early planning will provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on practices that would protect threatened and endangered species and special places on the landscape prior to catastrophic events. These advance plans will allow quick action to be taken to begin the

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restoration efforts and would prevent delays from lengthy public comment periods or judicial action.

This legislation is not about providing for more logging, it is about recovery of forests, biological diversity and wildlife habitat. It is about ending the waste that results from “running the clock out”. And it is about nurturing our forests for future generations. This legislation provides for sound forest stewardship and as a group representing over 700 professional foresters in Northern California – we support this action.

NorCal SAF would be pleased to work with the Senator and her staff in any way possible that would move a solution to this problem through the Senate. Please contact me if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

James J. Ostrowski, Chair  
Northern California Society of American Foresters

Cc: Congressman Walden  
National SAF

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