

Agricultural Stewardship Association, Alachua Conservation Trust, Allegheny Land Trust, American Forests, Appalachian Mountain Club, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District, Arch Cape Sanitary District, Bainbridge Island Land Trust, Bayou Land Conservancy, Bend Park and Recreation District, Berks Nature, Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce, Blue Mountain Land Trust, CAP-21, Carolina Climbers Coalition, Central Coast Land Conservancy, Champlain Area Trails, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, Colebrook Land Conservancy, Columbia Land Conservancy, Columbia Land Trust, Congaree Land Trust, Connecticut Land Conservation Council, Conservation Northwest, Deschutes Land Trust, Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands Fund, Ecola Creek Watershed Council, Ecotrust, Ekvu-Yefolecv Maskoke Ecovillage, Epic-Environmental Protection Information Center, Forterra, Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Friends of Accotink Creek, Great Peninsula Conservancy, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Jackson Hole Land Trust, Jefferson Land Trust, Kaniksu Land Trust, Kestrel Land Trust, Klamath Forest Alliance, Land Trust Alliance, Landmark Conservancy, Mahoosuc Land Trust, Mahoosuc Pathways, Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, Mainspring Conservation Trust, McKenzie River Trust, Milan Community Forest, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Monadnock Conservancy, Montana Association of Land Trusts, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards, Naturaland Trust, New England Forestry Foundation, Nisqually Community Forest, North Coast Land Conservancy, Northern Forest Center, North Olympic Land Trust, Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk – Abenaki Nation, Open Space Institute, Orange County Land Trust, Oregon Coast Alliance, Oregon Coast Community Forest Association, Oxford County Wellness Collaborative, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection, Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Roanoke Electric Cooperative, San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council, Saratoga PLAN, Save Our Saluda, Sharon Land Trust, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Society of American Foresters, Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Sustainable Northwest, The Climate Trust, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, The Vermont Land Trust, The Vital Ground Foundation, Thousand Islands Land Trust, Town of Dorset, Town of West Windsor, Town of Williston, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Upstate Forever, U.S. Forest Capital, LLC, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Woodlands Association, Wallowa Land Trust, Washington Association of Land Trusts, Washington Environmental Council, Watershed Research and Training Center, Western Foothills Land Trust, Western New York Land Conservancy, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Whatcom Land Trust, Whitefish Legacy Partners, Wild Rivers Land Trust

May 13, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Chairman  
House Interior and Environment  
Appropriations Committee

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
House Interior and Environment  
Appropriation Committee

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Senate Interior and Environment  
Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member  
Senate Interior and Environment

Appropriations Committee  
Dear Senators and Representatives:

As representatives of a broad coalition of conservation and forestry organizations and municipal agencies, we are writing to express our strong support for the U.S. Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP). Since its establishment in 2012, CFP has supported 51 community forest projects across 21 states and territories. Additionally, these investments in conservation have been used to leverage more than twice the federal funds. Building on this track record of success, the demand for CFP funding has grown significantly and currently far exceeds the available appropriation. For these reasons, we strongly urge you to build upon the CFP's history of achievement by approving \$5 million for the program in the Fiscal Year 2020 Interior and EPA Appropriations bill.

CFP is an innovative tool to advance the Administration's goals of supporting local economies, increasing opportunities for Americans to connect with forests in their own communities and fostering new public-private partnerships. We believe that these connections are vital to communities' livability and economic well-being. Since Fiscal Year 2012, CFP has contributed to this important effort by assisting local communities to secure forests for public recreation, sustainable forestry, and wildlife habitat and water quality preservation.

As you know, CFP provides matching funds to help local government entities, Indian tribes, and community based non-profit organizations purchase forestlands threatened with development for local ownership and management as community forests. The program directly addresses the urgent need to prevent the widespread conversion of private forests to non-forest uses. This threat was highlighted in the U.S. Forest Service report *Private Forests, Public Benefits*, which projected that 57 million acres of America's private forests could experience a substantial increase in housing density by 2030.

In its brief history, CFP has made substantial progress in preserving forests by combining federal and non-federal resources. Indeed, project partners leveraged \$8.7 million in federal funds to secure \$20.9 million in non-federal funding. As a result of these partnerships, more than 12,300 acres of private forestlands will be acquired to create new or expand existing community forests. This impressive leveraging ratio demonstrates the willingness of local entities to match federal funding with significant commitments of funding and other resources.

Given the strong interest in the Community Forest Program and its impressive leveraging successes, we urge you to sustain the program's growing momentum by providing greater funding to meet demand. **A \$5 million investment in the program as part of the FY 2020 Interior and EPA Appropriations bill will allow the program to benefit even more communities across the nation.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we hope you will give it the highest possible consideration.