



Society of American Foresters Statement

July 15, 2011

BETHESDA, MD—Today the Society of American Foresters (SAF), the professional society for forestry with over 14,000 members, announced support for the Silviculture Regulatory Consistency Act bills, S 1369 and HR 2541, introduced concurrently in the US Senate and the House of Representatives on July 14, 2011.

Sponsored by Senators Wyden (D-OR), Crapo (R-ID), Risch (R-ID), and Begich (D-AK), and Representatives Herrera Beutler (R-WA-3), Schrader (D-OR-5), Walden (R-OR-2), McMorris Rodgers (R-WA-5), Pingree (D-ME-1), and Michaud (D-ME-2), the bills affirm the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation of forestry as a nonpoint source of pollution under the Clean Water Act. The bipartisan legislation recognizes the efficacy of Best Management Practices programs and rectifies a 2010 US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision that reversed an earlier decision by the Oregon District Court and overturned a Clean Water Act regulation that had been in place for 35 years. Designating forest management activities and related road projects as point sources of pollution would require forest landowners to get permits similar to those issued for confined industrial sites and disregards the evidence that forestry is a minor contributor to water pollution and that Best Management Practices continue to improve the stream conditions on and adjacent to managed forests.

"Congress took an important action that will help foresters ensure forest sustainability," said Michael T. Goergen Jr., SAF Executive Vice-President and CEO. "For 35 years, locally based Best Management Practices have been successful in significantly reducing risks to water quality from forest management activities. Unnecessary and burdensome regulations don't encourage investment or retention of our private forestlands, which make up one third of our nation's forests. Providing landowners with the right incentives helps them avoid converting their forests to other uses that may be more profitable in the short term, but has consequences for all of us in the long term."

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The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. Founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, it is the largest professional society for foresters in the world. The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and, to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.