



For Immediate Release
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**BAUCUS, CANTWELL CALL ON FOREST GROUPS
TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS
WITH FUNDS FROM SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT**
Senators' letter urges environmental stewardship

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) today called on the U.S. Endowment for Forestry & Communities (Endowment) and the American Forest Foundation (AFF) to explain the extent to which they are using funds disbursed under the 2006 U.S. – Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) to further environmental initiatives. In their letters to the Endowment and AFF, the Senators noted the importance of prioritizing environmental causes among the meritorious initiatives mandated by the SLA.

"These organizations must be good stewards of the money entrusted to them under the Softwood Lumber Agreement, and good stewardship of these funds must include good stewardship of great American lands," said Baucus. **"This is an opportunity to prioritize the preservation of our forests for generations to come."**

"Congress needs to ensure that there is transparency and adequate oversight over how non-profit organizations are using funds from the US-Canadian Softwood Lumber Agreement," said Cantwell. **"Under the terms of this agreement, these funds must be spent for the real benefit of our forests and environment. Moving forward, I will continue working with my colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee to press for answers."**

The SLA authorized the United States to distribute \$500 million to organizations tasked with furthering timber-related meritorious initiatives, including environmental causes. In 2006, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative designated the Endowment and AFF to receive \$200 million and \$150 million, respectively, to carry out these initiatives.

The text of the letters read as follows:

July 8, 2008

Mr. Laurence Wiseman
1111 Nineteenth Street, NW
Suite 780
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Wiseman,

In 2006, the Office of the United States Trade Representative identified the American Forest Foundation (AFF) to receive \$150 million dollars to carry out meritorious initiatives described in the 2006 U.S. – Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA). The SLA mandates that these meritorious initiatives include projects addressing environmental causes, including forest sustainability and wildlife habitat.

We are pleased that the AFF has adopted as part of its 2008 goals the objective of promoting the sustainability of family forestry and creating new markets for family forests. We remain concerned, however, that the AFF does not adequately emphasize sustainable forestry projects that prioritize environmental concerns.

Each of the meritorious initiatives listed in the SLA reflects an important priority that must be fulfilled by the organizations selected to carry out the initiatives. The AFF's focus on strengthening the economic gains of America's family forests is important and welcome. But we must also ensure the environment sustainability of our forests. If we do not ensure environment sustainability, we will have no forests left to support our timber-reliant communities.

We urge the AFF to demonstrate its commitment to projects focusing on the environmental aspects of forest sustainability. We ask the AFF to provide within 30 days information regarding the steps it is taking to fulfill this important initiative as set forth in the SLA, and its own 2008 goals.

Sincerely

Max Baucus

Maria Cantwell

July 8, 2008

Mr. Dick Molpus
U.S. Endowment for Forestry & Communities
654 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39202

Dear Mr. Molpus,

In 2006, the Office of the United States Trade Representative identified the United States Endowment for Forestry and Communities to receive \$200 million dollars to carry out meritorious initiatives described in the 2006 U.S. – Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA). The SLA mandates that these meritorious initiatives include projects addressing environmental causes, including forest sustainability and wildlife habitat.

We are pleased that the Endowment has adopted as part of its Articles of Incorporation the goal of promoting educational and public interest projects relating to the sustainability of forests as sources of wildlife habitat, bio-energy, and other values. We remain concerned, however, that the focal initiatives identified by the Endowment do not adequately emphasize sustainable forestry projects that prioritize environmental concerns.

Each of the meritorious initiatives listed in the SLA reflects an important priority that must be fulfilled by the organizations selected to carry out the initiatives. The Endowment's focus on strengthening the economic conditions and capacity of American forests is important and

welcome. But we must also ensure the environment sustainability of our forests. If we do not ensure environment sustainability, we will have no forests left to support our timber-reliant communities.

We urge the Endowment to demonstrate its commitment to projects focusing on the environmental aspects of forest sustainability. We ask the Endowment to provide within 30 days information regarding the steps it is taking to fulfill this important initiative as set forth in the SLA, and its own Articles of Incorporation.

Sincerely,

Max Baucus

Maria Cantwell

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