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June 10, 2015

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
United States House of Representatives  
130 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Westerman:

I am writing to convey the support of the Arkansas Forestry Association (AFA) for H.R. 2647, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015. Organized in 1947, AFA is the only private non-profit trade association in Arkansas that represents the entire forestry community. AFA members and all Arkansans depend on healthy forests, whether they are privately-owned or national forest lands.

If enacted, this legislation will enhance opportunities for the U.S. Forest Service to use tools to better protect lands from wildfire, insects and disease. I know that our friends at the U.S. Forest Service here in Arkansas are striving to be as proactive as possible in managing this incredible resource. However, NFS lands continue to face real threats to long-term health and sustainability.

It is AFA's hope that using the tools outlined in the legislation will increase opportunities for sustainable forest management, which in turn will provide increased benefits including clean water, air, wildlife habitat, employment for rural communities, and high quality forest products, just to name a few. I'm pleased to see that there is a high priority identified in the legislation for increased collaboration. In addition, modernizing the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act is much needed.

I applaud your proactive approach to address barriers, streamline processes, build dialogue, increase opportunities for sustainable forest management and implement reforms that are aimed at making real change. Thank you for all that you are doing to keep our forests healthy – here at home and across the nation.

Sincerely,

Max Braswell  
Executive Vice President  
Arkansas Forestry Association