



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUL 18 2019

Mr. James Caswell
Chair
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
Post Office Box 273362
Ft. Collins, Colorado 80527

Dear Mr. Caswell:

Thank you for your letter of April 8, 2019, regarding the implementation of the President's Executive Order on Promoting Management of America's Forests, Rangelands, and other Federal Lands to Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk. I apologize for the delayed response.

I agree with you that successful implementation of the Executive Order requires program efficiencies, legislative changes, and funding. It will also take new partnerships and strategies such as, "Toward Shared Stewardship Across Landscapes: An Outcome-Based Investment Strategy," which calls for stronger collaborative decision-making with states and partners.

We are continuing to reform our processes, improve infrastructure, and collaborate with partners to set mutual priorities. This will not only let us reach our goals but allow us to expand our work across United States landscape.

The 115th Congress provided several new authorities through the Fiscal Year 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act and 2018 Farm Bill that will affect how the Nation's forests and grasslands are managed. Use of tools like the Good Neighbor Authority with more than 200 agreements in 37 states, 20-year stewardship contracts with cancellation ceiling relief, and internal process improvements such as environmental analysis decision-making, is reducing the time and cost needed to produce high-quality and science-based decisions.

The President's Fiscal Year 2020 Budget prioritizes investments to reduce wildland fire risk, improve forest and grassland conditions through shared stewardship with our partners, and contributes to rural economic prosperity. It also recognizes the overriding need to reduce the Federal deficit, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture shares in the responsibility of controlling Federal spending.

I look forward to your continued input on how to successfully manage our public lands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sonny Perdue", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Sonny Perdue
Secretary