

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

June 5, 2015

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Donovan:

I write to highlight the importance of Good Neighbor Authority to Wisconsin's forest communities, and urge you to finalize the guidance on the authority as soon as possible. Eighteen months have passed since this provision was passed into law as part of the 2014 Farm Bill, and Wisconsin stands ready to use Good Neighbor Authority as soon as the guidance is released from the Office of Management and Budget.

This tool is urgently needed in my state. Wisconsin's mills are so short on local timber that they are importing logs from other parts of the US and Canada in order to meet their demand. Yet the 1.5 million acre Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest adjacent to those mills has an estimated 350 million board feet of timber that has gone through environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act and is ready for sale. Good Neighbor Authority will allow this "on the shelf" timber to be sold and made available to the forest products industry faster than the Forest Service is able to do on its own.

I was proud to advocate for the expansion of Good Neighbor Authority in the Farm Bill because of the potential it holds to accelerate sustainable timber harvests, and to improve forest health and productivity. The State of Wisconsin and the Forest Service have worked extensively during the comment period to ensure that projects have been identified so that the State and our timber products industry can get to work just as soon as the guidance is final. Failure to quickly finalize this action will continue the status quo of uncertainty and slow cut rates, which harms Wisconsin's forest products industry, local businesses and communities.

Prompt issuance of Good Neighbor Authority is essential to get our forests working better for industry and ensuring that forest health goals are accomplished. I urge you to put this tool in action as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Tom Tidwell, Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Ms. Kathleen Atkinson, Regional Forester, Eastern Region, U.S. Forest Service