Statement of Steven W. Koehn
State Forester of Maryland
On Behalf of the National Association of State Foresters

Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture

April 30, 2003

On the President's Healthy Forests Initiative

I. Introduction

On behalf of the National Association of State Foresters, I am pleased to testify on the President's Healthy Forests Initiative. NASF is a non-profit organization that represents the directors of the state forestry agencies from all fifty states, eight U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. State Foresters manage and protect state and private forests across the U.S., which together encompass two-thirds of the nation's forests.

I am representing NASF in my role as Chairman of the Water Resources Committee. In recent years, the Water Resources Committee has taken the lead in development of proposed legislation to improve management of forested watersheds on non-industrial private lands. We believe the concepts of 'healthy forests' and 'healthy watersheds' are inextricably intertwined.

With approximately 190 million acres of federal lands now at risk to wildfire, and more than 70 million acres of all forestland ownerships at risk to increased mortality from insects and diseases over the next 15 years, it is essential that steps are taken to improve the condition of our forest resources. Such steps will protect communities, watersheds, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and the quality of our air and water, and will ultimately reduce the costs (environmental, social and economic) of catastrophic wildfire.

II. Need to Reduce Hazardous Forest Fuels

NASF has been deeply involved in the development and now, implementation, of the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy for a Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, dated May 2002. This document was developed pursuant to the conference report for the Interior Appropriations Act of 2001 and was endorsed by the Western and Southern Governors Associations. We have a State Forester serving on the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, which was established by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior. We have been supportive of the recent administrative efforts to facilitate implementation of the 10-Year Strategy, and we support additional legislative efforts that are consistent with the 10-Year Strategy and accompanying Implementation Plan. We believe that the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, introduced this week by Rep. McInnis and others, supports these efforts.

State Foresters recognize the importance and urgency of reducing the hazards to communities at risk of catastrophic fire. To do this, we must address hazards within the wildland-urban interface, but I must caution that the hazards are more than local in scope. To fully accomplish the goals of the 10-Year Strategy and Implementation Plan, we must look at the larger landscape and address the forest health and watershed issues on all ownerships. We note that the legislation introduced by Rep. McInnis and others takes this approach.

III. Watershed Forestry Assistance Program Provides Additional Benefits to the Healthy Forests Initiative

NASF recommends the inclusion of our proposed Watershed Forestry Assistance Program in any Healthy Forests legislation. Because of my long involvement with the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort, I am particularly supportive of this effort. We developed and proposed the Watershed Forestry Assistance Program to improve forested watersheds on non-industrial private forestlands. The initiative was considered last year as a part of the 2002 Farm Bill, where it received bipartisan support in the Senate. By offering incentives to improve the condition of these forested watersheds, the program would contribute significant benefits to the Healthy Forests Initiative.

The discussions surrounding the Healthy Forests Initiative were initiated by the unsustainable conditions of western forests, primarily on public lands. As important as these issues are, there are also important forest health and watershed concerns on all forestlands—public and private, large owners and small owners—across the country. The Watershed Forestry Assistance Program brings emphasis to the national relevance of the Healthy Forests Initiative.

Although ownership patterns and local conditions differ widely between regions, the protection and management of watersheds for the production of clean water is a critical issue everywhere. In the eastern U.S., where I live and work, this is particularly true, since 90% of the forestland is privately owned. The private forests of the northeast and southeast together produce two-thirds of the water we need for recreation and for fish and wildlife habitat. They also provide the drinking water supply for millions of Americans in the east. In addition to environmental benefits, these same private ownerships produce over 50% of the nation's wood and paper products.

The health of eastern forests is threatened by invasive pests and plants, fire, overcrowding, poor regeneration, and land-use fragmentation. Loss of forests is directly affecting the ability of some watersheds to sustain quality water supplies. The conservation, restoration, and stewardship of healthy private forestland is viewed as crucial to watershed health in the U.S.

In the west, the Watershed Forestry Assistance Program is no less important. For example, it can provide assistance to landowners for the rehabilitation and restoration of burned watersheds to limit soil erosion and benefit community drinking water supplies. Effective partnerships can address these issues before they become more overwhelming.

IV. Environmental and Economic Benefits of Utilizing Small, Noncommercial Wood From Overcrowded Forests

NASF supports forest biomass utilization as a tool to help reduce unnaturally dense forest fuels and the associated risks posed to communities and watersheds. Utilizing forest biomass from overstocked or unhealthy forest stands can also be an effective way to reduce the costs of treating hazardous forest fuels. Making use of otherwise non-commercial wood products can bring environmental benefits by supporting the production of renewable energy and lowering wildfire risks, thereby reducing the amount of carbon released in the atmosphere by catastrophic wildfires.

V. Impacts of Forest Pests on Healthy Forests

Provisions to enhance research programs to address forest pests will also help carry out the Healthy Forests Initiative on all lands. Accelerating efforts to address new invasive pests and providing additional assistance to aggressively implement pest management strategies would be helpful to all landowners and serve the public interest.

For example, Maryland has been dealing with hemlock wooly adelgid for several years now. If left unchecked, naturally occurring stands of hemlock, which are important in helping to maintain cold water fisheries, will be impacted with the same detrimental effects seen in adjacent mid-Atlantic states. Many other forest pests significantly impact our nation's forests, from the southern pine beetle, to the non-native emerald ash borer that is devastating forests of the midwest, to sudden oak death in the west, just to name a few. Noxious and invasive weeds also threaten our forests and are in need of aggressive control. Accelerating the work to address these and other forest pests through authorization and funding is critical to improving the health of our nation's forests.

VI. Conclusion

Legislation that will enhance public and private land managers' efforts to improve forest health and provide for healthy watersheds will benefit the public and the environment, and is simply good management.

On behalf of the National Association of State Foresters, I urge the Committee to include all of the above programs in legislation to carry out the President's Healthy Forests Initiative. These measures are designed to address and improve forest health on public and private lands, consistent with the National Fire Plan 10-Year Strategy and Implementation Plan. In particular, I will remind you that the Watershed Forestry Assistance Program proposed by NASF will provide benefits nationwide. The improvement of watershed conditions on private forestlands will complement the other goals of the Healthy Forests Initiative by enhancing water quality and quantity generated from our nation's forestlands.

Our abundant and magnificent forests helped to build our nation. Wise and sustainable forest policy, that recognizes the importance of healthy and resilient forests, will help to

assure its continued strength. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

STEVEN W. KOEHN

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OBJECTIVE

To continue to serve as the Director / State Forester of the Maryland DNR Forest Service leading to the position of Assistant Secretary for Resource Management.

SUMMARY

A seasoned and highly skilled professional forester with 20 years of experience in forest resource management and the administration of a state forestry agency with two years at the executive level. A highly motivated and innovative manager with excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and a strong work ethic. Major strengths include leadership, team building, planning and timely project delivery. Additional skills include Microsoft Office software, budget management and interdisciplinary coordination.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES - FOREST SERVICE
Director / State Forester **Sept. 2001 - Present**
Responsible for the statewide delivery of all technical and financial forestry assistance on both public and private lands. Maryland's state forestry agency is composed of 113.5 classified and contractual employees and has a budget of over $12 million.

- Wrote a major policy statement for the National Association of State Foresters on the importance of forest management and its role in ensuring quality water for drinking water supply watersheds.
- Lead a workforce planning effort that resulted in a major reorganization of the MD DNR Forest Service that created positive reclassifications for 38 employees.
- Responsible for the management of the 58,000 acre Chesapeake Forest, a unique public and private partnership that aims to support local renewable natural resource based industries while providing watershed and wildlife habitat protection.

Associate Director **Sept. 1991 - Sept. 2001**
Responsible for the direction and coordination of the following major programs: Private and Public Land Forest Stewardship, Urban and Community Forestry including the Forest Conservation Act, Nursery Operations and Tree Improvement, Wildland Fire Prevention and Suppression, and Chesapeake Bay Programming including the Stream Releaf Program.

- Co-authored one scientific/technical report, one technical training manual and three peer reviewed white papers. All three white papers were presented at professional conferences or scientific symposia.
- Founding member and author of the Maryland portion of the successful US Forest Service Large-Scale Watershed Restoration grant that created the interstate Potomac Watershed Partnership.
- Initiated a major geospatial analysis of Maryland's forests, fuel loadings, response capabilities and partners to produce a model that predicts wildfire risks for local communities.
- Developed policy that ultimately lead to the Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative (2010 miles by 2010) that was signed into existence in 1996 by the members of the Executive Committee of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

- Oversaw the closing of the Buckingham State Forest Tree Nursery in Harmans, MD, its relocation and construction ($5.3 million) in Preston, MD, as the John S. Ayton State Forest Tree Nursery named after the retiring Nursery Manager.

Supervisor of Resource Management **Jan. 1990 - Sept. 1991**
Staff specialist to the State Forester; responsible for all the agency's functions relating to forest resource management on non-industrial private forests, including: Cooperative Forest Management, Landowner Incentive Programs, and Demonstration Forests.

- Developed and implemented the Forest Stewardship and Stewardship Incentive Programs, both authorized by the 1990 Farm Bill, which serve as the primary delivery mechanisms for technical and financial assistance to private non-industrial forest landowners in Maryland.

Project Forester **Oct. 1984 - Jan. 1990**
Administered all Cooperative Management Programs in Baltimore County, MD, including: Forest Resource Management, Forest Product Utilization, Forest Fire Protection, and Urban & Community Forestry.

- Worked with the community of Dundalk, Baltimore County, MD, BGE, and Penn State University to remove over 350 roadside trees that were in poor condition and replaced them with a like number of appropriately sited tree species suitable for planting under overhead electrical distribution lines.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY **Spring/Fall 1993 – Fall 2002**
Instructor
Taught forestry related courses at the School of Professional Studies in Business Education in the non-credit liberal arts program. Previously taught courses include: Forest Ecology, Forest Management, Forest Stand Delineation and Forest Conservation Planning.

THE JAMES M. VARDAMAN AND CO., INC.
Woods Supervisor **June 1983 - Oct. 1984**
Provided forest management assistance for private timberland owners in the southeastern US as a consulting forester.

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
Forest Technician **May 1982 - Sept. 1982**
Felled timber and operated a skidder while thinning pine plantations on the University's forest.

AFFILIATIONS

National Association of State Foresters	Chair, Water Resource Committee Member, Legislative Committee Liaison, Nat'l Assoc. of Pro. Forestry Schools
Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters	Chair, Geospatial Analysis Workgroup
Maryland Forests Association	Member, Board of Governors
MD/DE Division of the Society of American Foresters	Chair, 2000-2001
Maryland State Stewardship Coordinating Committee	Chair
MD Assoc. of Forest Conservancy District Boards	Member, Executive Committee
Maryland Community Forest Council	Ad Hoc Member, Executive Committee
Potomac Watershed Partnership	MD Representative, Steering Committee

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Forest Science, The Pennsylvania State University, conferred May 1983
Certificate, Government Executive Institute, University of Maryland, completed October 1996

REFERENCES UPON REQUEST

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS

444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 540, Washington, DC 20001

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April 28, 2003

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
House Agriculture Committee
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) has been awarded the following federal funding awards since October 1, 2000.

1. Federal Award Grant No. 03-DG-11132540-006 was awarded on October 7, 2002 in the amount of $35,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service.

2. Federal Award Grant No. 03-DG-11132540-42 was awarded on December 20, 2002 in the amount of $251,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service.

3. Federal Award Grant No. 03-DG-11132540-004 was awarded on October 5, 2002 in the amount of $140,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service.

4. Federal Award Grant No. 03-DG-11132540-02 was awarded on October 7, 2002 in the amount of $10,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service.

5. Federal Award Grant No. 02-DG11130143-032 was awarded on December 14, 2001 in the amount of $190,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service.

6. Federal Award Grant No.02-DG-11130143-030 was awarded on December 14, 2001 in the amount of $10,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service.

7. Federal Award Grant No. 02-CA-11244225-109 was awarded on June 21, 2002 in the amount of $15,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed1/2/02*

TEL: 202/624-5415 **www.stateforesters.org** **FAX: 202/624-5407**

8. Federal Award Grant No.02-DG-11131325-015 was awarded on November 26, 2001 in the amount of $251,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 3/17/03*

9. Federal Award Grant No.02-DG-11131327-010 was awarded on December 4, 2001 in the amount of $130,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 9/30/02*

10. Federal Award Grant No.02-DG-11131325-014 was awarded on November 26, 2001 in the amount of $9,500 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 9/23/02*

11. Federal Award Grant No.01-CS-11083160-010 was awarded on January 8, 2001 in the amount of $130,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 12/26/01*

12. Federal Award Grant No.01-DG-11130132-57 was awarded on February 20, 2001 in the amount of $65,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 9/27/01*

13. Federal Award Grant No.01-DG-11130111-004 was awarded on October 1, 2000 in the amount of $9,500 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 7/5/01*

14. Federal Award Grant No.01-DG-11130143-042 was awarded on January 9, 2001 in the amount of $9,500 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 9/27/01*

15. Federal Award Grant No.01-DG-11130111-003 was awarded on October 1, 2000 in the amount of $251,000 to NASF from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area of the USDA Forest Service. *Closed 12/21/01*

Any further information required concerning the above federal awards may be directed to NASF at the above telephone number.

Sincerely,

James L. Sledge, Jr.
President