



## WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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February 11, 2011

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

On behalf of the Western Governors' Association, we commend you and the U.S. Forest Service for conducting a very deliberative process to ensure collaboration and public review of your new planning rule for forests and grasslands. The commitment of the Forest Service to seek public input prior to implementing the rule should be a model for other agencies.

Western Governors work collaboratively on regional issues, such as watershed protection, wildlife conservation and forest management issues. We will review this new rule and work with the Forest Service to support the continuation of such efforts.

WGA also commends the USFS for conducting 14 of the 16 regional listening sessions in the Western states. States are committed to clarifying the roles of federal, state and local governments in a way that will result in joint planning, regional collaboration and coordinated actions by all. By listening to those in the West working to develop collaborative solutions, we believe the Forest Service will be able to enhance its planning rule.

Sincerely,

C.L. "Butch" Otter  
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