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September 19, 2013

The Honorable Doc Hastings  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1203 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hastings:

On behalf of the 1.1 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), we offer our full support for H.R. 1526, the Restoring Healthy Forests for Healthy Communities Act, and urge the House of Representatives to promptly consider final passage of the bill.

This proposal would renew the federal government's commitment to manage federal forests for the benefit of communities impacted by federal forestland, improve forest health, and help prevent catastrophic wildfires. All of these benefits would have positive impacts on properties and communities which are dependent on these forest resources for their economic survival.

Specifically, H.R. 1526, as amended, would reestablish the priority of actively managing our forests and promote responsible timber production on Forest Service commercial timber land; would improve forest health and prevent catastrophic wildfires by allowing significant state and local involvement; would improve forest management by allowing counties to actively manage portions of National Forest land; would address the forest lands currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Western Oregon, known as "O&C Lands;" and would allow for a short-term extension of Secure Rural Schools payments. Also of note is the measure's inclusion of Good Neighbor Authority – which allows state and federal authorities to work together on fire mitigation efforts even when project areas cross ownership boundaries.

NAR applauds the legislation for addressing job creation and enhancement of rural forest economies by addressing the federal governments' continued inability to effectively manage our federal lands. The management provisions in H.R. 1526 will provide a long term solution to ensuring sustainable revenue sharing with forested counties. NAR strongly believes that pursuing management and restoration of the nation's forests will put people back to work in the woods, make federal forest policy work for forest communities across the country, provide tools to create and manage healthy forests, and enable local communities to fund roads, schools and emergency services.

Sincerely,

Gary Thomas  
2013 President, National Association of REALTORS®



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