



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
GOVERNOR

January 12, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary-designate
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary-designate Vilsack:

Congratulations on your appointment by President-elect Obama for Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As Governor of a state that contains millions of acres of farmland and federal forest land, I look forward to working with you.

Oregon is very fortunate to have vast areas of forests that are relatively untouched by humans. Here, old growth trees still stand tall, rivers run wild through pristine watersheds, and wildlife thrives. Our state's inventoried roadless areas are also a critical piece of the national effort to fight climate change. With its highly productive forests, Oregon's per-acre potential for carbon storage is among the highest in the world.

I have been a strong supporter of protecting forested roadless areas from road construction and commercial logging. Fortunately, the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule set aside approximately 1.9 million acres of inventoried roadless lands as areas where no development would take place. During that rulemaking process, Oregonians submitted more public comments per capita than any other state: 92% of Oregon's 79,000 comments supported the complete protection of these valued lands.

I believe it is critical that President-elect Obama reinstate the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule upon entering office. Although the rule was repealed by the last administration, the issue is still unsettled and management guidelines for the nation's roadless areas remain unclear. A temporary moratorium on commercial road-building and logging in all inventoried roadless areas until the rule can be reinstated and fully implemented, would be a wise move in light of this legal uncertainty.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with you in the future to conserve Oregon's roadless areas for the benefit of current and future generations.

Sincerely,



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor

TRK:jh:ab
c: Interior Secretary-designate Salazar

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