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February 25, 2010

Dear IFWG members,

We would like to take this opportunity to express our concern with the Interagency Forest Working Group (IFWG) process for responding to comments submitted by our groups to-date and to suggest a path forward that could create an effective forum for addressing our organizations' scientific input on wildland fire, native biodiversity, carbon storage and use of forests for biofuels. We value the opportunity to work with you to ensure a meaningful, substantive agency response to the many issues we have raised in our written and verbal comments

To date, the Interagency Forest Working Group has not substantively responded to our comments or integrated into IFWG decisions any of the factual information we have provided. We have made comments at public sessions, engaged in detailed discussions in outside meetings, and provided written comments, but have not yet received a substantive response by IFWG or its agency members.

Moving forward, we propose the following course of action to bring these issues into the IFWG process. As a first step, we request that the IFWG agencies provide substantive responses to the issues raised in our prior written submissions. We ask that IFWG provide a science-based response to the material we have presented and the comments we have offered thus far. We would then like the ability to reply to the IFWG agencies' substantive response. This process will narrow the range of concerns, show that further work in this area does have productive potential, and improve IFWG decision making.

Hopefully, this step-wise process will provide a solid basis for undertaking Tasks 1, 2 and 3.

We look forward to discussing this proposal with you in more detail. Perhaps it would be most productive to arrange a telephone call or meeting, to speak in further detail regarding the above.

Thank you.

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