

DATE

Dear Senator _____,

As one of your constituents, I would respectfully request your support of healthy forests and the forest products industry in North Carolina by co-sponsoring Senate Bill 971 which is sponsored by Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Mike Crapo (R-Idaho).

This bipartisan legislation preserves the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) policy treating forest roads as non-point sources under the Clean Water Act (CWA) regulated through state-adopted Best Management Practices (BMPs). In North Carolina, compliance with state BMPs is 93% in most recent surveys conducted by the North Carolina Forest Service and compliance is even higher when the loggers are enrolled in the NCFA's training program, ProLogger.

This legislation codifies EPA's longstanding policy which appropriately treats "natural runoff" from forest roads as nonpoint sources. This regulation is appropriate for large areas of forest throughout the U.S., which should be treated differently than factories, wastewater treatment plants and other confined facilities.

The legislation also ends the confusion in the courts over whether forest roads are point sources. The Supreme Court did not resolve this issue in its recent ruling, and litigators are already seeking new ways to use the courts to regulate forest roads as point sources. Forestry and clean water experts agree that point source permits for forest roads will not improve water quality compared to BMPs. Permits and other point source regulations that increase cost and litigation risk may hurt the environment by accelerating the fragmentation and loss of private forestlands.

The forest products industry is North Carolina's top manufacturing industry, directly employing over 67,000 people in our state, and it includes over 2,000 forest products facilities, many of which are small, family-owned and operated companies. The forest products industry has a presence in every county in North Carolina. North Carolina boasts 18.6 million acres of forestland, roughly 60% of the state. In terms of ownership, 85% of the state's forests are privately owned. Two-thirds of that ownership is comprised of non-industrial private forestland owners.

I would certainly appreciate your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,