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May 30, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation to be Secretary of Agriculture.

Since the U. S. Forest Service was created under President Theodore Roosevelt's administration in 1905, the agency has always had a great and supportive relationship with the Department. We look forward to your leadership in the years ahead as the agency continues to not only protect and manage the 193 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands, but also to provide programs that ensure these public lands provide for the country's wants and needs as well.

We are pleased and very supportive of your commitment to revitalize rural communities and their economies. We are offering our help and are responding to the Executive Order, promoting Agriculture and Rural Prosperity in America, signed on April 25, 2017.

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) is an organization that represents thousands of Forest Service retirees who have dedicated their lives to caring for the nation's forests and managing the National Forests and Grasslands. We care deeply about the management and use of the natural resources that are so vital and important in making our nation strong.

Our membership spans the entire spectrum of natural resource and research professionals. In addition to managing the National Forest and Grasslands, the Forest Service also manages the largest natural resource research organization in the world, represents our nation with its International Forestry arm, and in cooperation with the nation's State Foresters, the State and Private Forestry branch manages diverse cooperative programs from rural assistance to urban and community forestry. The Chief of the Forest Service is the nation's Chief Forester. Our members represent each of these four mission critical areas and include several former agency Chiefs.

NAFSR members have literally thousands of years of collective on the ground and applied

experience. As Forest Service employees, we lived and worked in rural communities across the nation that are dependent on National Forest resources. We have witnessed, lived, and implemented the increase in laws, regulations, and resulting policy changes, and know the effects. Many of us still live in, and have deep roots, in these same rural communities.

Mr. Secretary, NAFSR and its membership are uniquely positioned to provide advice and counsel to the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity established by Executive Order 13790. We are enthusiastic about the opportunity provided by the Executive Order.

We have ideas, we have solutions, and we are eager to help. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*James L. Caswell*

James L. Caswell, Chair  
National Association of Forest Service Retirees