

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 28, 2016

Government Leaders Recognize the Value of SFI Program for Sustainable Forest Management and Responsible Procurement

WASHINGTON, DC — Elected leaders and federal administrators issued statements Monday – in one case a decision by a federal agency, in another a letter from a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators to a federal agency – that both point to the important role of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Program in advancing sustainable forestry and providing pathways for responsible procurement.

Recognizing the value of forest certification in protecting water quality

On June 27, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a [decision](#) that no additional regulations are needed to address storm water discharges from forest roads under the *Clean Water Act*. In its decision, the EPA recognizes the success of state best management practices (BMPs), which are proven to be effective in protecting water quality. The EPA also recognizes the role of forest certification programs, including SFI, which “have made important contributions to improved BMP implementation through logger training, landowner outreach, and water quality requirements.”

The EPA decision specifically points to the SFI Logger Training and Education Program, which “ensures loggers are educated about using and maintaining appropriate forest road BMPs.” Thanks to the logger training requirements in the SFI Standards and the dedication of the SFI community, training was provided for more than 10,000 resource and harvesting professionals in 2015 and more than 170,000 total since 1995 (this total may include individuals who have completed training programs more than once). Ninety-five percent of the fiber delivered to SFI Program Participant mills was delivered by harvesting professionals who have been trained in sustainable forestry practices. (Learn more about the SFI Program and Community in the [SFI 2016 Progress Report](#).)

“The SFI community is a leader in protecting and enhancing water quality through its standard requirements and training harvesting professionals. We are pleased that the EPA has recognized it can rely on this robust framework to achieve water quality goals,” said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of SFI Inc.

The EPA decision is also supported by the National Association of State Foresters. Its 2015 report on BMPs for water quality, stated “...SFI [has] made important contributions to improved BMP implementation through logger training, landowner outreach, and water quality requirements.”

Calling for fairness in federal lumber purchasing

Also on June 27, a bipartisan group of 11 Senators, led by U.S. Senators Angus King of Maine and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, sent a [letter](#) to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz urging the agency to revise its current position that excludes SFI and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) from its list of priority products for agency programs.

The letter states: “ATFS and SFI certified forests provide a renewable timber resource, clean water, wildlife habitat, and thousands of jobs in the forest sector and related industries... There is no basis – scientific or otherwise – for excluding products from these forests for federal use.” The Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) position formed the basis for an Interim Recommendation by the EPA in September 2015, which excluded SFI and ATFS from federal procurement of lumber.

The Senators also cite the recent recognition of SFI and ATFS under the [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\) program](#) as a reason for the Department to reconsider its position. One of the DOE’s criteria for recognizing priority products is that they contribute to LEED points for existing buildings and new construction.

The letter follows letters sent earlier this spring, from bipartisan groups of U.S. House and Senate Members to the EPA urging the agency to recognize wood products certified to SFI and ATFS in its

federal wood procurement recommendations. These letters criticized the agency for excluding “many responsibly-sourced, American-grown forest products.” The letters included [one on March 2](#) signed by 28 Members of the U.S. House, led by Congressmen Kurt Schrader of Oregon and Gregg Harper of Mississippi, and [one on March 29](#) signed by 10 Senators, led by U.S. Senators Roger Wicker of Mississippi and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

“The strong bipartisan support SFI receives from our elected representatives is truly gratifying. We are confident that federal procurement policies will continue to evolve to recognize the important contributions of the SFI community,” said Abusow.

About the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI)

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc. (SFI) stands for future forests. An independent nonprofit organization, SFI promotes sustainable forestry with comprehensive programs supporting ecosystem research and conservation, education and professional accreditation, community engagement, and an internationally-recognized forest certification program. Since 1995, SFI program participants have invested more than \$1.5 billion in sustainable forestry research and more than 280 million acres/113 million hectares in the US and Canada have been certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard. In addition, SFI promotes sustainable forestry by offering the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard and the SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard to address the diversity of the forest products supply chain. SFI on-product labels help consumers support future forests through responsible purchasing decisions. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber [board of directors](#) with equally balanced representation from the environmental, social, and economic sectors. Learn more at sfiprogram.org.

Media Contact

Elizabeth Woodworth
Vice President, Communications and Community Engagement
Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc.
Tel: 202-596-3452
elizabeth.woodworth@sfiprogram.org