

Northern Forest Center
PO Box 210
Concord, NH 03302

North Country Council
107 Glessner Rd.
Bethlehem, NH 03574

Rep. Paul W. Hodes
506 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hodes,

On behalf of the four-state Steering Committee of the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Northern Border Regional Development Commission. We appreciate your leadership on behalf of the people of the Northern Forest and your attention to the Sustainable Economy Initiative (SEI).

As you know, in 2006 the Governors of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and New York appointed 60 regional leaders to guide the Sustainable Economy Initiative in developing strategies to improve the community and economic prospects of the Northern Forest region in concert with ongoing conservation. As the Congress proceeds with establishing a Northern Border Commission, we want to ensure that the ongoing work of this four-state body is fully incorporated into your deliberations.

In keeping with a unanimous vote of the four-state Steering Committee at its January 24-25 2008 meeting, we respectfully request you to directly incorporate the ongoing work of the Sustainable Economy Initiative into the legislative record establishing the Northern Border Commission.

The members of the Steering Committee take seriously their charge from the Governors and seek your assurance that their work is listened to, understood, and used to inform federal policy. Specifically, as you consider reconciliation of the House and Senate versions of the Northern Border legislation, the members of the Steering Committee request that you incorporate the following into the record:

1. The Sustainable Economy Initiative shall serve as a foundation for the work of the Northern Border Commission. The new commission can be informed by a wealth of current knowledge and information recently and collaboratively developed and supported by leaders across the region. We request that the legislative record reflect the intent of the Congress that the findings and recommendations of the Sustainable Economy Initiative (due in mid-2008) and other recent regional and state planning efforts shall serve as a foundation of the commission's planning.

In addition, the Steering Committee has articulated a set of values for how work across the region is conducted. We ask that these be reflected in the legislative record as guidance for how the commission conducts its business:

- ◆ Integrate community, economic, and ecosystem issues in keeping with the history, values, and character of the Northern Forest region;
- ◆ Make decisions through collaborative, voluntary, and consensus-based processes.
- ◆ Work through public-private partnerships that incorporate the best of private business, non-profit, and government roles.

2. The Commission shall minimize new federal bureaucracy and incorporate local priorities.

While many Northern Forest communities would welcome additional federal funds for implementation of important projects, many regional leaders are concerned about creating a new layer of bureaucracy. To alleviate some of this concern, the Steering Committee supports a commission that does not create a duplicative federal bureaucracy and that is respectful of locally determined priorities including those developed through local Economic Development Districts.

3. Funding shall be additive. In a tight fiscal environment, there is concern that new funds for a Northern Border Commission would result in reduced funding for the region through other federal programs. We ask that funding for the commission should be explicitly designated as additive and not competitive with existing federal funding sources for the region.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on behalf of the Northern Forest region. The members of the Steering Committee look forward to continued work with you and your congressional colleagues to secure a vibrant future for the people, communities, economies, and lands of this unique and special place.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative Steering Committee,

Stephen D Blackmer
President
Northern Forest Center

Michael King
Executive Director
North Country Council

Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative

Project Steering Committee

Maine

Peter Beringer	Support Services Director, Maine Forest Service
Bruce Bornstein	Chief Operating Officer, Isaacson Lumber Company
Sandra Brawders	Executive Director, Professional Logging Contractors of Maine
Robert P. Clark	Executive Director, Northern Maine Development Commission
Warren C. Cook	Sugarloaf Global Partners
Alec Giffen	Director, Maine Forest Service
Bruce Hazard	Director, Mountain Counties Heritage, Inc.
Bruce D. McLean	Executive Director, MAGIC (Katahdin region)
Sandra Neily	Communications Coordinator, University of Maine Forest Bioproducts Research Initiative
Matt Polstein	President, New England Outdoor Center
Andy Shepard	President & CEO, Maine Winter Sports Center
John Simko	Town Manager, Town of Greenville
Robert Thompson	Executive Director, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
Everett Towle	President, Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine
Keith Van Scotter	President & CEO, Lincoln Paper and Tissue, LLC
Stephen Wight	Owner and Manager, Sunday River Inn & Cross Country Ski Center
Robin Zinchuk	Executive Director, Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce

New Hampshire

George Bald	Commissioner, NH Dept. of Resources & Economic Development
Stephen Barba	Executive Director for University Relations, Plymouth State University
Thomas Deans	Tillotson Trust
Deanna Howard	Director of Regional Development, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
Cleve Kapala	Director of Government Affairs and Relicensing, TransCanada Hydro, Northeast Inc.
Doris Burke	Community Development Manager, Public Service of New Hampshire
Catherine McDowell	Executive Director, Family Resource Center at Gorham
Frumie Selchen	Executive Director, Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire
Racheal Stuart	Vice President of Program, NH Charitable Foundation
Henry Swan	Wagner Forest Management
James Tibbetts	President, First Colebrook Bank
Jim Wagner	Economic Development Director, Androscoggin Valley Economic Recovery Corporation

New York

John Bartow	Director, Tug Hill Commission
Cali Brooks	Executive Director, Adirondack Community Trust
Brian Houseal	Executive Director, Adirondack Council
Betsy Lowe	Director, NY Dept. Environmental Conservation Region 5
Arthur Lussi	President, Crowne Plaza Resort
Terry Martino	Executive Director, Adirondack North Country Association
John Mills	President, Paul Smith's College
J.R. Risley	President, Adirondack Association of Towns & Villages and Supervisor, Town of Inlet
Ann Ruzow Holland	Community Planning Advisor
Fran Sheehan	NY Dept. Environmental Conservation
Zoe Smith	Program Coordinator, Wildlife Conservation Society, Adirondack Communities & Conservation Program
Bill Thomas	Chair, Warren County Board of Supervisors and Supervisor, Town of Johnsburg
Lani Ulrich	Founding Director, CAP-21
Chris Westbrook	Director, SUNY ESF Ranger School; President, Clifton-Fine EDC; Vice Chair, Council of Eastern Forest Technology Schools
Ross Whaley	Former Chairman, Adirondack Park Agency

Vermont

Michele Boomhower	Executive Director, Lamoille County Planning Commission
Darby Bradley	Special Asst. for Donor and Government Relations, Vermont Land Trust
Maureen Connolly	Development Director, Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont
George Gay	Executive Director, Northern Forest Alliance
Kay Henry	Northern Forest Canoe Trail
Jolinda LaClair	State Director, USDA Rural Development
Jim Davis	Northeastern Vermont Development Association
William Sayre	Treasurer, A. Johnson Lumber
Steven Sinclair	Director of Forests, Department of Forests Parks and Recreation
Stephen Webster	Attorney
Jonathan Wood	Commissioner, VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation