



The Northern Forest Center

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January 7, 2009

The Honorable «First\_name» «Last\_name»  
United States «Senate\_House»  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear «Salutation»:

As Congress considers the 2009 federal economic recovery plan, **we urge you to invest in job creation and economic development in the Northern Forest region of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York by fully funding the Northern Border Regional Commission**, and to support existing federal programs that serve the needs of this region and other rural places.

The Northern Forest region has seen and felt the forces of economic change coming for more than a decade. Two-thirds of the land base has changed ownership in the past dozen years as the industrial landowners who once dominated the region have sold their lands. Paper mill closures in Groveton and Berlin, NH, and Millinocket, ME, are recent examples of a changing regional manufacturing sector which has lost 35,000 jobs since the mid-1970s. In places where living wage jobs have declined, communities struggle to maintain their civic structure and community and social infrastructure. Many indicators of personal well-being—e.g. education and health—are stagnant and lag behind the southern tiers of the Northern Forest states.

**Yet in response to these challenges, the region has come together to develop a shared vision and shared priorities to achieve economic resurgence—a strategy that uniquely positions the Northern Forest for strategic investment in economic development priorities that will create jobs and model how rural, forested regions can contribute to a new green economy.**

In October 2008, the *Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative*—a two-year undertaking funded by the Economic Development Administration and guided by over sixty regional leaders—released its *Strategy for Economic Resurgence*—the first-ever, 4-state strategy for sustainable economic development in the Northern Forest (summary attached).

The completion of the *Strategy* coincides with the creation of the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) in the 2008 Farm Bill. This federal-state commission is a vehicle to provide flexible, additive and highly leveraged funding to community and economic development initiatives that put people to work while protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural assets that give this region its distinct character and comparative economic advantage.

**Full \$30 million funding for the NBRC will support “shovel ready” projects that align with both the *Strategy* and the intent of stimulus investment:**

- **Infrastructure**: Complete broadband communication networks and improve multi-modal transportation, water and sewer, and other basic infrastructure.
- **Renewable energy**: Develop renewable energy projects to expand affordable, local, and sustainable use of the region's indigenous energy resources.
- **Workforce development**: Train workers for new opportunities in green industries such as forest products, hospitality, and renewable energy.

State and local governments, regional development and planning organizations, businesses, non-profit organizations, and other entities in the Northern Forest stand ready with projects and initiatives that will advance these priorities and put people to work. NBRC funds will provide a catalytic source of matching money to leverage other public, private and philanthropic dollars—a critical role in rural areas where match requirements are often a barrier.

**Along with full funding for the NBRC, we urge that other existing federal programs serving rural regions like the Northern Forest be included in stimulus allocations.** Rural communities are a critically important part of the green economy as sources and stewards of clean air and water, food and fiber, renewable energy, recreation amenities, and wildlife habitat. Yet by their very definition, rural places lack the population—and thus often the tax and investment base—to fully meet their community and economic development needs. Federal programs targeted specifically to rural areas and needs are essential to maintaining the assets that underlie the green economy. A list of these programs—as developed by the *Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative*—is attached.

One hundred years ago, the Northern Forest was one of the economic success stories of our nation—a place where an entire economy of countless jobs, great wealth, and hundreds of communities was created and sustained by the forest. Working as a region, we are confident that we can achieve that success once again and contribute at the same time to the economic resurgence of our nation as a whole. We ask for your support and thank you for your efforts on behalf of this special place.

Sincerely,

Adirondack Community Trust  
Cali Brooks, Executive Director

Adirondack Council  
Brian L. Houseal, Executive Director

Adirondack Economic Development Corp.  
Mike Conway, Executive Director

Adirondack North Country Association  
Terry Martino, Executive Director

Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments  
Robert Thompson, Executive Director

Arts Alliance of Northern NH  
Frumie Selchen, Executive Director

Appalachian Mountain Club

The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks  
David Gibson, Executive Director

Stephen P. Barba  
Executive Director, University Relations  
Plymouth State University

Stephen D. Blackmer  
Canterbury, NH

David Blittersdorf  
Founder - NRG Systems, Inc.  
CEO - Earth Turbines, Inc.  
Williston, VT

Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC)  
Christopher Recchia, Executive Director

Tom Both  
Chair, Adirondack Harvest

Don Caldera  
Board President, Adirondack North Country Association  
Owner, Country Business Services, Lake Placid, NY

The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire  
Mil Duncan, Director  
Curt Grimm, Deputy Director

Central Adirondack Partnership for the 21st Century, Inc (CAP-21)  
Deborah Carhart, Executive Director  
Old Forge, NY

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.  
Ronald Phillips, President

John Collins  
Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks

Warren Cook  
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Cofounder, Maine Network Partners

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White Mountains Community College, Berlin, NH

Eastern Maine Development Corporation  
Chris Shrum, Director of Community Services

Jan Eastman  
Peacham, VT

Katharine Eneguess  
President, White Mountains Community College, Berlin, NH

Family Resource Center @ Gorham  
Catherine P. McDowell, Executive Director

R. Alec Giffen, Director  
Maine Forest Service

Grafton County Economic Development Council  
Mark Scarano, Executive Director

Tom Gross  
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Hubbard Brook Research Foundation  
David Sleeper, Executive Director

Jennifer Huntington  
Newton, MA

Innovation Network for Communities  
John Cleveland, Tamworth, NH

Steve Kahl  
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Brian Kermath  
Director, Center for Rural Sustainable Development  
University of Maine at Fort Kent

Terrance J. Large  
Treasurer, Northern Forest Center Board  
Bow, NH

Professional Logging Contractors of Maine, Northeast Master Logger Certification Program

David Marvin  
Owner, Butternut Mountain Farm

William H. McDowell  
University of New Hampshire  
Professor of Water Resources Management, Department of Natural Resources and the  
Environment; Presidential Chair; Director, NH Water Resources Research Center

John W. Mills, Ph.D.  
President, Paul Smiths College  
Paul Smiths, NY

Open Space Institute

Maine Rural Partners  
Mary Ann Hayes, Executive Director  
Michael F. Bush, Chair

Mountain Counties Heritage, Inc.  
Bruce Hazard, Executive Director

Natural Resources Defense Council

Sandra Neily  
Executive Director, Tanglewood 4-H Camp and Learning Center, Lincolnville, ME

Bo Norris  
Environmental Funders Network  
Cofounder, Maine Network Partners

North Country Council  
Michael King, Executive Director

North Country Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Council, New  
Hampshire

Northeast Kingdom Travel & Tourism Association  
Gloria Bruce, Executive Director

Northern Community Investment Corporation  
Jon Freeman, CEO and President

Northern Forest Alliance  
Susan Arnold, Chair

Northern Forest Canoe Trail  
Kate Williams, Executive Director  
Kay Henry, Founding Director

Northern Forest Center  
Rob Riley, President  
Paul O. Bofinger, Chairman

Northern Maine Development Commission  
Robert P. Clark, Executive Director

Northern Vermont Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council  
Christine Kaiser, Chair  
Berlin, VT

Public Service of New Hampshire  
Doris Burke, Community Development Manager

John Richardson  
Commissioner, Maine Dept. of Economic & Community Development

Ann Ruzow Holland  
Community Planning Advisor, Willsboro, NY

Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests  
Jane A. Difley, President/Forester

Racheal Stuart  
Senior Program Director, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation - Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund

Sustainable Forest Futures  
Steve Rohde, President

James Tibbetts  
President, First Colebrook Bank

Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands

Everett L. Towle  
President, Small Woodland Owners of Maine

Leilani C. Ulrich  
Founding Director, CAP-21 (Central Adirondack Partnership for the 21st Century)

University of Vermont Extension  
Lisa Chase, Natural Resources Specialist

Vested for Growth (VfG)  
John Hamilton, Managing Director

Jim Wagner  
Woodstone

Ross Whaley  
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Wildlife Conservation Society  
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Will Wootton  
President, Sterling College, Craftsbury Common, VT

Julianna Acheson, Ph.D., Interim Director Women's and Gender Studies, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Maine at Farmington

Attachments:

- Summary of the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative Recommendations [online at <http://www.northernforest.org/downloads/sei/Summary-Economic-Resurgence.pdf>]
- Federal funding programs in the Northern Forest [online at <http://www.northernforest.org/downloads/sei/Full-Strategy-Economic-Resurgence.pdf>, see pp 48-49]