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REGIONAL WHIP

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4608

March 18, 2002

Dear Colleague:

Trees in cities and towns provide billions of dollars in clean air and water. Yet, urban forests are declining and decreasing across the country at an alarming rate. I am asking for your support of the Urban and Community Forestry program at \$50 million in the Forest Service's fiscal 2003 budget.

This important line item directly improves the quality of life and the environment for over 80 percent of Americans; those of us who work and live in cities and towns. It provides the opportunity for cities to put their tree cover to work as green infrastructure that solves air and water quality issues. Through partnerships with state agencies and non-profit organizations, this program assists over 10,000 communities and provides over 1,450,000 hours of training and 1,000,000 hours of volunteer assistance. It's a good investment -- every \$1.00 spent leverages \$2.40 in cash or in-kind services. Urban and community forestry is a financially sensible way to revitalize our cities and towns.

There are a multitude of benefits that trees provide for the environment and the quality of life in America's towns and cities. Trees naturally absorb pollutants like carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulphur dioxide from the atmosphere. They cool the air, lowering average temperatures on our city streets, which also slows the formation of smog and low-level ozone. Trees clean our water by preventing soil erosion and by reducing and controlling storm water run-off. They can be planted around homes and buildings to lower heating and cooling costs and to provide much-needed wildlife habitat.

By helping cities meet air and water quality standards through the preservation and planting of trees, we can save billions of federal dollars. The urban and community forestry program allows us to leverage local support and build long-term capacity, not financial dependence, to address these important issues. This federal funding also ensures that the largest number of Americans receive the natural resource expertise of federal and state forestry agencies.

If you would like to sign the letter, reprinted on the reverse side of this Dear Colleague, please contact Tim Aiken in my office at 202 225-4376 before Friday, April 12th.

Yours truly,



James P. Moran