



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

August 3, 2007

The Honorable Mike Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns,

Protecting California's world-renowned forests and wildland areas has been a priority of my administration from my very first day in office. For almost three years, California has been operating under the assumption that our recommendations and on-the-ground expertise on determining roadless areas within our state boundaries would be fully considered and adopted. Disappointingly, the Forest Service has decided otherwise.

We have worked to keep unnecessary and damaging roadways out of four Southern California forests. With your recent denial of our appeals, the Forest Service has completely ignored its own written assurances that prohibit building roads in roadless areas, and has completely disregarded the good faith work we have done jointly for many years. Also troubling is that these written assurances provided to us by Forest Service officials were included as part of our appeal, yet any reference to these written assurances is wholly absent in the Forest Service denials. As a result of the failure to recognize our desire to protect our forests and wildlands, I have directed the California Resources Agency to formally contest this poorly crafted decision.

Between January 2005 and April 2006, California Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman exchanged letters with federal regional foresters in which both foresters assured the Secretary that forest plans would be issued so that roads were only built under very narrow and specific circumstances. This standard was the basis for my development of a California-specific rule. Unfortunately, forest management plans issued later in April 2006 envisioned the building of roads in four Southern California forests. I've enclosed the letters exchanged between Secretary Chrisman and the two regional foresters so that you may see these inconsistencies yourself.

On July 13, 2006, the Resources Agency appealed to the Forest Service, contending that its forest management plans for the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests do not reflect commitments made to preserve the roadless characteristics of Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). Also, the Resources Agency held that the plans failed to consider appropriate mapping standards under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and National Forests Management Act (NFMA) for all official and unofficial routes in the IRAs.

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The Forest Service had informed the Resources Agency that both official and unofficial national forest system routes would be present in Inventoried Roadless Areas designated "Back Country," "Back Country Motorized Use Restricted" and "Developed Area Interface." Yet it failed to include any such information in its management plans. Furthermore, Forest Service staff has contradicted previous statements made by the regional forester, saying that projects are being considered in Inventoried Roadless Areas that may require roads. Unfortunately, these projects remain unidentified in the land management plans.

The July 2006 Resources Agency appeal asked the Forest Service to honor its commitment and ensure that California's forests remain protected from day-to-day Forest Service decisions or the uncertainty of a national roadless rule that is now threatened by litigation. Your recent denial is unacceptable and places the protection of valuable land in greater jeopardy. Frankly, it is not too much to ask for the Forest Service to do the right thing and live up to its own assurances. Please take the necessary action to ensure that California's forests are safeguarded for generations to come and resolve this important issue before any more time and resources are expended. The people of California deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arnold Schwarzenegger", written over the printed name.

Arnold Schwarzenegger