

# Pacific Forest Trust *News*

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*Pacific Forest Trust Statement on Energy and Climate Bill*

## **American Power Act is 'Promising Start'**

*Bill Holds Potential to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Forests, Farms and Ranch Lands while Creating Jobs, Supporting Rural Economies*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 12, 2010) — The Kerry-Lieberman energy and climate bill, The American Power Act, is a promising start for securing our nation's energy independence and addressing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with conversion and development of forests, farms and ranch lands, Pacific Forest Trust President Laurie Wayburn said in a statement Wednesday.

"We appreciate the leadership and hard work that Senators Kerry and Lieberman have put into developing this bill, and the months of effort by Senator Graham, as well," Wayburn said. "The American Power Act is a significant and welcome step forward. The Senators clearly recognize that working forests, farms and ranch lands can play an important role in a new, clean energy economy and in addressing climate change."

"We're especially encouraged that the bill calls for good accounting of forest carbon stocks on the landscape, creating a means of tracking emissions and sequestration of greenhouse gases," Wayburn said. "These data will demonstrate the contributions of land – and landowners – to meeting our climate and energy goals as well as ensure efforts to reduce emissions are truly effective."

The Act would create robust incentives for forest conservation and stewardship through a domestic offset program, thanks to legislative language contributed by Senators Stabenow and Baucus. It also calls for incentives for landowners to conserve and manage their lands to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A funding mechanism for these incentives is unspecified. "But this is a strong starting point," Wayburn said, adding that she anticipated a continued dialogue among lawmakers who are seeking to refine and improve the bill to capture the full range of economic and environmental benefits from protecting working lands. "Economists have found that investment in forest conservation and restoration yields the most jobs per dollar of any industry studied, so it makes sense for lawmakers to find a way to pay for that investment," Wayburn said.

The bill's provisions for conservation are good news for advocates of America's working landscapes. Forests, farms and ranch lands provide the essential land base for nearly half of the United States' renewable energy production, and they play a crucial role in offsetting our domestic greenhouse gas emissions. Yet we are losing 2.2 million acres each year, an area greater than the State of Delaware.

PFT is leading a coalition <<http://www.forestsworldwonders.org/2010/05/pft-coalition-support-mounts-as.html>> comprised of more than 80 large and small U.S. landowners, mill owners, conservation groups and market leaders across the United States. Coalition members are urging U.S. senators to allocate 5% of emission allowances to fund the protection of

America's working forests, farms and ranch lands through permanent conservation easements and incentives for sustainable land management.

Privately owned U.S. forests and other working lands increasingly are threatened by economic forces that drive their owners to sell the land for conversion to other uses. Most woodlands owned by families will be sold and developed over the next 50 years, according to recent USDA projections.

"This is a critical time for deciding the future of our forest, farm and ranch lands," Wayburn said. "With the right type of investment, these landscapes will continue to provide for our climate and energy security. Without it, we're unlikely to meet our goals."

To read the full text of the Coalition's letter to Senators Kerry, Graham and Lieberman, visit: <http://www.pacificforest.org/policy/coalitionletter.html>.

For more information or to arrange interviews with Laurie Wayburn or other coalition members, contact Chris Harrison, PFT Communications Director, at 415-561-0700 ext. 13.

#### **About The Pacific Forest Trust**

Since 1993, the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) has been dedicated to conserving and sustaining America's vital, productive forest landscapes. Working with a diverse array of partners, PFT advances innovative, incentive-based strategies to safeguard America's privately-owned forests and their many public benefits. Through its award-winning Working Forests, Winning Climate initiative, the San Francisco-based non-profit is advising landowners, local and state governments and federal leaders about the inclusion of forest conservation and sustainable land management in climate policies. PFT also is the project developer and manager of the Van Eck Forest Project, California's first registered emissions reduction project. PFT has provided conservation advice and services to owners of more than 5 million acres of forestland from coast to coast. To learn more about the Pacific Forest Trust, please visit: [www.pacificforest.org](http://www.pacificforest.org).

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