



## NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

July 8, 2015

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Cannon House Office Building, Room 215  
Washington, DC 20515

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**Re: NCAI Support for Amendment #3 to Create a Tribal Forest Management Demonstration Project to H.R. 2647 - The Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015**

Dear Congresswoman Lujan Grisham:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities, I would like to thank you for offering Amendment #3 to be considered during the House floor debate on H.R. 2647 – The Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015. NCAI fully supports this amendment to and urges the House of Representatives to adopt it into the bill.

Amendment #3 creates a Tribal Forest Management Demonstration Project, allowing Indian tribes and tribal organizations to contract with the Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service to perform administrative, management, and additional program functions pursuant to the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004. These contracts allow for tribally-driven management of our tribal forests, supporting the exercise of tribal self-determination and self-governance. Further, this Amendment recognizes that American Indians and Alaska Natives, as first stewards of this land, are in the best position to determine the management of our own forestry resources in traditional and culturally appropriate methods.

Additionally, Amendment #3 strengthens Title VII – Tribal Forestry Participation and Protection of H.R. 2647, which requires federal land management agencies to respond within 120 days to tribal requests to manage federal forest lands and to complete analysis within two years, and permits tribes to conduct forest management activities on federal lands where they have a tribal interest. Since forests do not recognize the arbitrary boundaries dividing our lands, the including tribal management of tribal forests within Title VII helps create cohesive management practices throughout our forestry systems, promoting healthy forests, ecosystems, and economies.

I would like to thank you again for your introduction of Amendment #3, and NCAI fully supports its adoption into H.R. 2647. If you have any additional questions, please contact NCAI Staff Attorney & Legislative Counsel Colby Duren, [cduren@ncai.org](mailto:cduren@ncai.org) or (202) 466-7767.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Pata, *Executive Director*