

# Don't Ignore the Climate Change Solution in our Own Backyard

U.S. forests now absorb 10% of U.S. annual carbon emissions. This climate solution could be doubled to 20% according to the U.S. EPA. But to reach our nation's climate and renewable energy goals, we must engage our nation's 10 million family forest owners. By planting trees, promoting conservation, and encouraging management practices that increase carbon storage, we can begin solving climate change on forestland in our own backyard.

The climate change bill includes carbon incentives for international forests...

Let's engage America's forests too.

Congress must act to ensure U.S. forests are fully utilized in reducing carbon emissions. Carbon offset markets and carbon incentives, like those provided in **HR 2880, the Buy American Carbon Incentives Act of 2009**, are needed to support forest owners who take steps to increase carbon storage on their forestland. This is a climate remedy that can go to work immediately.



American Forest Foundation

# Engaging America's Private Forests in Climate Solutions

**HR 2454, the climate bill moving in the House of Representatives, must be improved to ensure that family forest owners can participate in the new carbon and renewable energy markets and incentives.**

- To meet our nation's climate and renewable energy goals, we will need to engage the private landowners who own 56% of all the forestland in the U.S.
- Sustainably managed forests, like those certified by the American Tree Farm System®, can supply sustainable biomass for renewable energy production, in addition to clean water and wildlife.
- In addition to the climate and energy benefits, access to these markets and incentives by forest owners would provide important supplemental income opportunities, helping them stay on the land and keep it forested.

**To improve HR 2454, America's 10 million family forest owners urge Congress to:**

- Strengthen provisions for carbon offset markets to *guarantee* forest owners can play a role in reducing carbon emissions and reducing emitters' costs of compliance under cap and trade.
- Strengthen the role of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in creating the rules and overseeing these carbon markets, given their expertise and experience with private forest owners.
- Expand the definition of "renewable biomass," removing restrictions on use of biomass from certain forest types and instead allowing all sustainable forest biomass to be used to meet our renewable energy needs.
- Include and fund the Forest Carbon Incentives Program, as detailed in HR 2880, the *Buy America Carbon Incentives Program of 2009*, in addition to improvements to offset markets. "Buy American" is needed to:
  - **Engage America's Forests Too:** There's an international forest supplemental program, but there is no comparable domestic program in HR 2454 (unlike previous climate change bills).
  - **Capture Carbon Benefits from Small Forest Owners:** This program will capture measurable amounts of carbon from smaller landowners who may have a tough time playing in offsets.
  - **Immediate Implementation:** The program will help get forest and agriculture carbon projects started right away (since offsets are likely to take 2-5 years to get up and running).
  - **Test New Practices:** The program will help test new forest and agriculture practices for carbon markets (make sure they are fit for market).
  - **Conserve U.S. Forests:** The program will help conserve forests here at home, addressing U.S. deforestation by helping to keep families on the land and keep the land forested.

*Read more about the role of family forests in addressing climate change in AFF's Report: Family Forests and Climate Change at: [www.forestfoundation.org/AFF\\_FFCC\\_final.pdf](http://www.forestfoundation.org/AFF_FFCC_final.pdf). Please share a copy of this report with your Congressional Members. For additional information on HR 2454 and other climate policy issues visit [www.familyforestaction.org](http://www.familyforestaction.org)*