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Department of
Agriculture

Forest
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Dear Friends of the Sierra Nevada

After two years of studying the Sierra Nevada and conferring with many people representing various interests I have made my decision on improving the Sierra Nevada Framework. I made this decision in the aftermath of the tragic fires in southern California where 26 people died, more than 3600 homes were destroyed and tens of thousands of people were evacuated from the path of raging wildfires. During that terrible firestorm people's lives were turned upside down, valuable wildlife habitat and precious watersheds were destroyed along with roads, power lines and other critical community infra-structures.

From my personal experience in California's national forests, I am convinced that much of the Sierra Nevada is in the same dangerous condition that fueled fires in the drought stricken, overcrowded forests of southern California. When I walk through the overly dense forests in the Sierra Nevada I fear the same kind of catastrophic fires could also occur there. I will not let that happen on my watch. My professional commitment to responsible stewardship of the public's land compels me to act now. We may have fires in the Sierra Nevada anyway, for our forests are unnaturally overstocked. But, there are reasonable changes I can make to the Sierra Nevada Framework to help prevent severe fires. I am determined to make those changes.

The improvements we are making strike a balance between the needs of people and wildlife. They carefully consider social expectations of national forest management and, most importantly, they responsibly manage the forests today so we will have forests for the future.

By carefully determining how and where we reduce the dangerous fuels—near communities and in strategic locations to protect watersheds and wildlife—I believe we can make a difference. Restoring healthy forests will allow us to once again enjoy beautiful, open stands of large trees, rich in wildlife, abundant with clean water and fire-safe for people and animals alike.

Please look carefully and thoughtfully at the final supplemental environmental impact statement, and especially at the record of decision. In them, I believe you will find responsible improvements to the Framework that give field managers the guidance and tools they need to protect old trees, wildlife, watersheds and communities. Those local managers will need your help and support to make these improvements truly effective in your community. Please join me in supporting their efforts to make your forests healthy and safe on into the future.

Sincerely,

JACK A. BLACKWELL
Regional Forester

