



File Code: 2400/3400

Date: **MAR 19 2014**

Honorable Phil Bryant
Office of the Governor
Post Office Box 139
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Governor Bryant:

On February 7, President Obama signed into law the Agricultural Act of 2014, better known as the 2014 Farm Bill. This five-year legislation has many authorities and provisions that will assist us greatly in accomplishing the agency mission, particularly in those areas where we have focused our highest priority work: ecological restoration, support to communities, and reducing the risk of wildfires. Among the provisions that pertain to the Forest Service, the Farm Bill includes an important provision for addressing insect and disease infestations.

Section 8204 of the Agriculture Act of 2014 states, "Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Agriculture Act of 2014, the Secretary shall, if requested by the Governor of the State, designate...one or more landscape-scale areas...in at least one national forest in each State that is experiencing an insect or disease epidemic." After the end of the 60 day period, the Secretary may designate additional areas as needed to address insect or disease threats.

This letter is to inform you of the opportunity for requesting insect and disease area designations in your State. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated his authority to the Forest Service for reviewing and approving insect and disease area designations consistent with the Agriculture Act of 2014. The Forest Service is available to work with your office to provide information in helping you identify areas for designation. I encourage you and your staff to reach out to local Forest Service offices as you see fit.

In accordance with the Act, requests are due on or before April 8, 2014. The Forest Service will work diligently to review your requests and make insect and disease area designations based on the criteria outlined in the Farm Bill. The insect and disease area designation(s) made in your State will be communicated to your office through a letter from the Forest Service.

Please submit your requests in writing to Tony Tooke at the U. S. Forest Service. You may contact Tony with any questions at (202) 365-5648 or by email at ttooke@fs.fed.us.



For packages delivered via the United States Postal Service, submit your requests using the following address:

USDA Forest Service
Attn: Tony Tooke, Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System, 5NW
1400 Independence Ave SW
Mailstop 1106
Washington, DC 20250

For packages delivered via UPS or Fedex, submit your requests using the following address:

U.S. Forest Service
Attn: Tony Tooke, Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System, 5NW
201 14th Street SW
Washington DC 20250

Sincerely,



THOMAS L. TIDWELL
Chief

