

**SUFC Policy Working Group Call  
January 4, 2013**

Participating: Jake Donnay and Cara Boucher (National Assoc of State Foresters); John Barnwell (Society of American Foresters); Faith Campbell (The Nature Conservancy); Gerry Gray and Rebecca Turner (American Forests); Rebecca Arvin (Water Env. Federation); Alice Ewen (USDA Forest Service); Danielle Dills (National Assoc of Conservation Districts); Jen Hinrichs (SUFC)

Summary on fiscal cliff deliberations and impact on SUFC interests:

- 112<sup>th</sup> congress ended one of the most unproductive in history. 113<sup>th</sup> was sworn in 1/3/13.
- The automated spending cuts (8-9%) – or sequestration - have been punted/postponed. It remains unclear how the new Congress convening will deal with the fiscal issues. If this new Congress is unable to come together (debatable) to find a resolution, then the automated spending cuts WILL go into effect on the current 2013 budget at the end of March 2013.
- The FARM Bill has been extended through September 2013. It is NOT expected to be a high priority this year (at least out of the gate) with competing interests and with some of the key players changing (ranking member of Senate Ag from Sen. Roberts (KS) to Sen. Cochran (MS) etc.), the most recent version will likely be “re-opened”, creating further delay.
- WG expressed some interest in reviewing the current platform and weighing the merits/downsides of integrating new requests (i.e., pests/invasives) into the SUFC platform.
- Appropriations – Jake/Cara will coordinate comments and outline recommendations for FY'14. Also, see attached.
- FY13 will operate on a continuing resolution (CR) until March 27– but more will be known in the coming weeks as the new Congress gets underway. FS is curtailing/conserving travel funds; there is no other information being circulated at this time (at least at program level in the FS).
- Logistical issues for SUFC Advocacy Day (Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>): In the past SUFC has not finalized their recommendations (on Appropriations budget) until *after* the Forest Service has released its budget response and justification. The FS usually submits this within a couple weeks of the President’s budget (usually within first two week of Feb.); however, this year it may all be pushed back – impacting SUFC’s ability to wait until the FS service justification is out – leaving SUFC in a wait and see mode re: ability to follow past procedure.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

WG will review the attached draft documents for discussion at the next WG call, Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>. Also, please review the last edition of the Farm Bill leave-behind from 2012 Advocacy Day. [http://www.urbanforestcoalition.org/doc/SUFC\\_2012%20FarmBill%20Leave%20Behind.pdf](http://www.urbanforestcoalition.org/doc/SUFC_2012%20FarmBill%20Leave%20Behind.pdf)

**NEXT MEETING: 9 AM, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>. WG will review attached platform drafts on Farm Bill and Appropriations AND discuss any other issues of interest in 2013 to SUFC members. For example, are there any other opportunities or accomplishments this group wants to address with the new Congress (may include outreach to other Federal Agencies).**