

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 26, 2014

Jim Pena  
Regional Forester.  
Pacific Northwest Region, Forest Service  
1220 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mr. Pena,

It has come to our attention that the United States Forest Service (USFS) has not selected a region from which the 2016 Capitol Christmas Tree will be chosen. We understand that this decision is often made during the annual USFS meeting with Chief Tidwell each December. We ask that you advocate for the nomination of USFS Region 6, and specifically a tree from the state of Oregon, to be selected as the 2016 Capitol Christmas Tree.

Through this annual tradition, states from around the country have been able to showcase their unique biodiversity and highlight the importance of timber and forestry issues within their state. As you know, Oregon has 11 National Forests, ranking it second in the nation for USFS designated forests. We derive much of our history, economy, and culture from our forested lands. However, Oregon has only been selected once to provide the Capitol Christmas Tree.

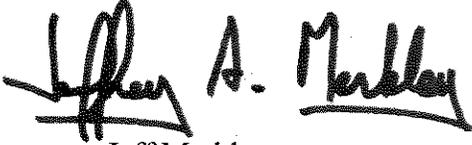
Oregon is a great candidate for the 2016 Capitol Christmas Tree because 12.1 million acres, nearly 20 percent of the state, is covered by National Forests. These forests include a diverse range of habitats and various types of trees that are popular during the holidays such as Douglas firs, Pine, and Spruce. In addition, Oregon is the national leader in Christmas tree production and in 2013 produced 6.4 million trees.

Another great reason to select a tree from Oregon is to highlight the role that forests play in supporting the American economy. Oregon is the top producer of plywood and softwood lumber in the United States and much of this is used to build homes. In fact, the state produced over four billion board feet of lumber in 2013, which is enough lumber to build over 419,900 homes. Finally, Oregon's National Forest attracts roughly 11 million tourists every year and support roughly 15,000 jobs. These forests not only contribute to Oregon's reputation as a wild and scenic state, but provide people with opportunities to explore the outdoors and learn about the importance that forests have played in our history.

We understand that selecting a Capitol Christmas Tree is no easy task and requires additional work on behalf of USFS region and district staff. However, Oregonians from across the state will greatly appreciate the work of the USFS staff in finding the perfect Capitol Christmas Tree from the state of Oregon.

We want to thank you for reading this letter and working to nominate one of the National Forests in Oregon as the home of the 2016 Capitol Christmas Tree.

Sincerely,



Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress