

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 25, 2014

Tom Tidwell
Chief
United States Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Dear Chief Tidwell,

It has come to our attention that every December during the United States Forest Service (USFS) annual meeting in Washington, DC, the issue of which USFS region will provide the Capitol Christmas Tree is determined. We are writing to request that the 2016 Capitol Christmas tree be chosen from USFS Region 6, and specifically from a National Forest in the state of Oregon.

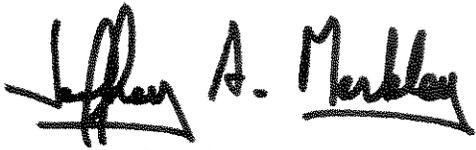
Through this annual tradition, states from around the country have been able to showcase their unique biodiversity and highlight the importance of timber and forestry issues within their state. As you know, Oregon has 11 National Forests, ranking it second in the nation for USFS designated forests. We 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 appreciate you reading this letter and taking the time 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