Proudly representing the nation’s family forest landowners, owning over one-third of the nation’s forested acres, the American Forest Foundation is actively involved in forest conservation and stewardship.  Currently supporting more than 248,000 landowners on-the-ground in their efforts to care for over 6 million acres of California forestland, we appreciate and support the Board’s concept paper outlining methods for combatting climate change on working lands.  Especially important are the collateral benefits that good stewardship and active management of forestlands, such as clean water and wildlife habitat, can provide.  In California alone, nearly 3 out of every 5 acres at risk from fire in important watersheds are privately-owned, and family forest owners are ready play a role in addressing all of these forest challenges.

The American Forest Foundation would urge the Board to pay due attention to family landowners in this process as the plan is fully implemented.  While we understand the State’s initial acreage targets will consider only lands where state-based intervention is funded, we would hope that future developments consider the financial reality, and on-the-ground expense, of management practices when setting future acreage targets.

Finally, as a priority of the American Forest Foundation, we would like to encourage the Board to understand the vital role markets for wood products play in enabling good stewardship on private forestlands.  While many landowners would like to take part in management that provides these valuable benefits, bereft of markets, many may be unable.  At a national level, AFF is active in working to encourage these markets through programs that support new and innovative uses for wood products, such as mass-timber, biomass heating, and other technologies.  Should the state take steps to encourage markets for managed timber, we are confident voluntary landowner participation in this sort of active management would be easier to attain.

Thank you again for your attention to this important issue, and we look forward to offering our assistance wherever possible.