NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE TRUST LANDS
RESOLUTION NO. 2023-04

SUPPORTING 2023 FARM BILL, GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY AND FORESTRY PROVISIONS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTED TRUST LANDS

Whereas, the National Association of State Trust Lands ("NASTL") and its member states manage over 515 million acres of trust lands, minerals, and waterways that are interspersed with federal lands; and

Whereas, members of NASTL have state constitutional mandates to manage millions of acres of lands for economic development, public education, conservation, recreation, and other public purposes provided by state law; and

Whereas, NASTL member states with forested lands fulfill their constitutional mandates through the responsible management of forest resources that are often surrounded by U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management forested lands and management policies on those federal lands heavily impact forested trust land management; and

Whereas, in 2014, Good Neighbor Authority was expanded from a 2 state pilot program to a nationwide program, available to any State with National Forest System, National Grasslands, or forested Bureau of Land Management lands; and

Whereas, Good Neighbor Authority allows States to work in true partnership with the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to accomplish restoration goals and stimulate the rural economy through responsible land management, timber production, and forestry products production; and

Whereas, States have invested substantial resources to match federal efforts, and are providing staff to help administer restoration projects and facilitate timber sales and production; and

Whereas, use of Good Neighbor Authority has led to an increase in treated acres to greatly decrease wildfire risk and substantially increase in timber outputs since inception; and

Whereas, Good Neighbor Authority provides a productive path forward to improve land management, encourage state-federal cooperation, and improving states abilities to fund education from forested trust lands; and

Whereas, the U.S. Congress is currently debating the 2023 Farm Bill which includes important forestry provisions that will enhance States' abilities to effectively and cooperatively manage forested trust lands on behalf of public education; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. NASTL encourages the United States Congress to support and pass a 2023 Farm Bill with forest management provisions that offer State Trust managers to sustainably manage forested trust lands in support of public education and other public institutions;

2. NASTL encourages the United States Congress to support and pass a 2023 Farm Bill that permanently reauthorizes Good Neighbor Authority, improves collaborative Landscape Scale Restoration, and promotes cross-boundary wildfire management;

3. NASTL encourages the United States Congress to remove from the 2023 Farm Bill provisions that would require Good Neighbor Authority project revenues to be expended only on federal lands;

4. NASTL encourages the United States Congress to remove or extend the provision that sunsets a cooperating states ability to utilize Good Neighbor Authority project revenue on non-federal restoration projects;

5. NASTL encourages the United States Congress to reframe the Landscape Scale Restoration program as applying to "all lands" and not merely "rural" forested areas;

6. NASTL encourages the United States Congress to modify the authority granted to the USDA Forest Service to supplement existing mechanisms for cross-boundary wildfire mitigation; and

7. NASTL encourages the United States Congress to create an emergency forest watershed program under the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to allow non-federal sponsors to partner with the United States Forest Service following wildfire damage or other natural disasters to protect watersheds on National Forest System lands from soil-erosion and flooding, restore watershed lands, and to protect downstream water supplies, water infrastructure, life and property.

Adopted this 11th day of July, 2023

President, NASTL   Secretary, NASTL

This Resolution will remain in effect through July 31, 2025
unless otherwise terminated, amended, or replaced by the Association.