

May 26, 2010

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
223 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Wyden:

We the undersigned organizations are writing to express our strong support for HR 4509 and S. 3279, the **Small Business Environmental Stewardship Assistance Act of 2010**. We stand together in our interest to advance urban forestry-related policies that provide multiple benefits for the public, wherever they live.

We support policies that assist local governments and local partners in developing the capacity for long-term management of their urban forests, trees, and green space. We support federal tree planting programs and initiatives that call for collaborative engagement of all relevant community partners and federal and state agencies to create a network that effectively sustains healthy natural and man-made ecosystems and communities. To assure maximum effectiveness, we recommend federal legislation and programs recognize the need for coordinated delivery systems at the federal, state, and local level. By reauthorizing the National Small Business Tree Planting Program, we believe HR 4509 and S. 3279 will accomplish these objectives.

The Small Business Tree Planting Program was authorized for several years in the 1990s and was administered by the Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA provided grants to state forestry agencies to contract with local nurseries, arborists and landscapers to plant trees around retail storefronts, rental housing complexes and community parks. The program leveraged federal dollars with non-federal sources to improve the urban and community tree resources of many of the nation's towns and cities. **More than 18,000 small landscaping firms were employed to plant over 23 million trees across the country as a result of the program.**

Once again, the SBA Tree Planting Program can contribute to the “green infrastructure” essential to improved public health and a higher quality of life. Tree planting projects completed under the program will provide multiple social, environmental and economic benefits to neighborhoods and communities across the country by:

- Helping conserve energy and decreasing heating and cooling costs;
- Improving air quality and sequestering carbon;
- Managing stormwater during large rainfall events;
- Encouraging consumers to spend more time and money in retail and business locations;
- Promoting Main Street revitalization, stabilizing property values and supporting community reinvestment; and
- Bolstering local economies and beautifying communities by making public-sector nursery and landscaping work available to firms hard-hit by the current recession.

Like any capital investment, green infrastructure projects completed under the program do not end when tree planting is complete. They will require monitoring, maintenance and care. The undersigned organizations will work with SBA to assure agencies and organizations that perform these services are involved in early project planning (and assure any costs incurred are covered) should HR 4509 and S. 3279 come to pass.

We appreciate your dedicated attention to these issues and look forward to working with you to successfully reauthorize the SBA National Small Business Tree Planting Program.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Community Trees
American Forests
American Nursery and Landscape Association
American Planning Association
American Public Works Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Arbor Day Foundation
International Society of Arboriculture
Keep America Beautiful
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Foresters
Society of Municipal Arborists
Society of American Foresters
Tree Care Industry Association, Inc.