

Native Plant Conservation Campaign*
Natural Resources Defense Council*
Defenders of Wildlife*
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility*
Endangered Species Coalition*
Xerces Society*
Center for Native Ecosystems

July 16, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our support for Section 335 of the House FY 2004 Interior Appropriations bill. Section 335 will block funding for competitive sourcing analyses in the USDA Forest Service and related agencies within the Department of the Interior.

There are a number of important problems with the President's competitive sourcing initiative. Federal resource management professionals are invaluable to the proper management and conservation of this nation's public lands, waters, plants and wildlife. Critical functions that are currently performed by public employees with years of scientific training, detailed understanding of environmental laws and agency procedures, and site specific experience may be shifted to less qualified private firms and individuals. Public employees are accountable only to their employers, the taxpayers of the United States. In contrast, private firms are accountable to their owners and boards of directors, as well as to clients. This may cause firms to cut costs and quality of work and may also create conflicts of interest that put public resources at risk.

Further, the Administration is requiring taxpayers to bear the cost of the determinations regarding which staff and functions are suitable for outsourcing. The costs of these determinations may reach tens of millions of dollars.

For all of these reasons, we agree with the authors of Section 335 that the competitive sourcing program should be put on hold for FY 2004 pending a full examination of its costs and benefits. We ask that you support this sensible and fiscally prudent proposal. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

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