



**North Carolina Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services**  
*N.C. Forest Service*



**Steven W. Troxler**  
Commissioner

**Gregory Hicks**  
Assistant Commissioner

May 23, 2024

Mr. James Melonas  
Forest Supervisor, National Forests in North Carolina  
U.S. Forest Service  
160 Zillicoa Road, Suite A Asheville,  
NC 28801

Dear Mr. Melonas:

As Commissioner of Agriculture in North Carolina, I respectfully submit the following request regarding the revised Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Plan that took effect in early 2023. I am aware of delays in implementation of the Plan, and I strongly encourage action that will result in proceeding with active forest management efforts tied to keeping our North Carolina forests healthy and productive.

I recognize the challenges of responsibly managing our public forests. The large number of engaged stakeholders and the nearly ten-year timeframe for this Plan's revision is an indication of the complexity of such a task. My Department has offered numerous recommendations throughout this process, as we understand how important the National Forests are to North Carolinians, our environment and local economies. No Plan of this magnitude will be viewed by all stakeholders as meeting all their objectives, but I view it to be fairly balanced with many effective strategies outlined for forest managers to act on.

Further delay in Plan implementation represents a risk to our National Forests, including increased wildfire susceptibility, heightened insect/disease outbreak and the loss of forestry sector capacity such as loggers and forest markets. Proactive forest management, utilizing scientifically based silvicultural principles, will help keep our forests healthy while contributing to our State's critical forest-based economy. Responsible management of our National Forests is needed to complement the health and productivity of the region's woodlands owned by private landowners.

The revised Plan outlines activities such as forest thinning's, restoration harvests, invasive species control and strategic annual harvesting that are directly tied to such responsible management.

I respectfully request that the U.S. Forest Service take action to implement the revised Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Plan.

Thank you for your efforts to serve the citizens and forests of our great State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steven W. Troxler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Steven W. Troxler  
Commissioner