PHIL BRYANT
GOVERNOR
March 28, 2014

SDA Forest Service
Attn: Tony Tooke, Assoc. Deputy Chief for
National Forest Systems, 5NW
1400 Independence Ave SW, Mailstop 1106
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Associate Deputy Chief Tooke:

Section 8204 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 allows the Governor of the State to request the designation of insect and disease treatment areas by the Secretary of Agriculture. I am writing to request that the Trace Unit of the Tombigbee National Forest on the National Forests in Mississippi, an area where there is a high probability of a severe Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) outbreak this year, be designated as a landscape scale insect and disease treatment area.

The timber industry, as you are aware, is a major industry in Mississippi contributing $10.38 Billion dollars to the Mississippi economy and creating 63,365 jobs. Given the explosive nature of SPB and the severe outbreak developing on the Trace Unit of the Tombigbee National Forest, the beetle-caused tree mortality could potentially be devastating to the Forest, the Natchez Trace Parkway, and surrounding state and private forest lands in Chickasaw County. The health and vitality of local communities and the timber industry is at stake.

The Mississippi State Forester and the National Forests in Mississippi Forest Supervisor respectfully advise and recommend that you formally request Forest Service Chief Thomas Tidwell to designate the Trace Unit of the Tombigbee National Forest as a landscape level treatment area for the purposes of combating this severe SPB epidemic.

Thank you for your consideration as we work to protect our National Forest lands for all the people to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Phil Bryant
Governor

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