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## **Court Affirms Forestry's Positive Role in Addressing Climate Change**

### *Decision Verifies Carbon Benefits of Active Forest Management*

**Sacramento, Calif., February 22, 2011** – In a strongly worded opinion validating California's forest practice laws, a Superior Court judge has ruled that timber harvesting under the state's comprehensive forestry standards is not only appropriate under the law, but also advances the fight against climate change. The ruling declares that the methodology used by the state to approve timber harvesting by private landowners is valid under California's environmental laws, and that the state's forest practices can help improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Judge Patrick Riley in El Dorado County presided over a consolidated case in which environmental activists challenged 19 Timber Harvesting Plans (THPs) submitted to the state by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) in eight counties. Plaintiffs argued that the plans did not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because they did not properly or adequately address greenhouse gas emissions from timber harvesting. In his 25-page opinion Judge Riley disagreed, saying:

*"The THP applications and approved THPs did address CEQA concerns and included an analysis of the GHG emissions and sequestrations involved in each THP." He added: "In conclusion, the court finds all of the issues raised by CBD in its opening and reply briefs, whether directly addressed herein or not, are without merit in so far as they contend the THPs involved failed to fully advise the public concerning the GHG issue as well as the entire environmental impact picture and provide a complete and penetrating overview of the environmental and GHG impacts in particular. [The THPs] comply with all statutes and regulations governing emissions and sequestrations and comply with all CEQA rules and requirements."*

This ruling means SPI and other forestland owners can proceed with forest management activities that provide family wage jobs in rural California communities, supply lumber for consumers and conserve forest resources.

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“This is a clear victory for the state’s sustainable forest management standards and clear affirmation that active forest management provides a significant carbon sequestration benefit,” said California Forestry Association president David Bischel. “Efforts by activists to stop timber harvesting and force jobs out of rural California by arguing that forestry harms the environment were soundly rejected by the court. Forestry is the only economic sector in the state that provides a net carbon sequestration benefit, yet taxpayers unwittingly subsidize an endless stream of litigation designed to block it.”

“The decision highlights SPI’s thorough environmental analysis and commitment to sustainable practices,” said SPI spokesman Mark Pawlicki. “Regulations require we perform a thorough environmental analysis including the impact of harvest and replanting on greenhouse gas emissions. We have complied with those laws and demonstrated that sustainable forest management can have a positive effect on reducing carbon emissions and counteract the negative impacts of climate change.”

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) filed a series of eight lawsuits against the state for approving the Timber Harvest Plans alleging that the methodology used by SPI to analyze the effect of timber harvesting on greenhouse gases was inadequate. The state’s permitting process requires all forestland owners to include a comprehensive GHG analysis and estimate the potential emissions from timber harvesting and related activities such as equipment operation and transportation. By planting trees after harvest and always growing more wood than is being harvested on its lands, SPI demonstrated that its forestry practices provide a greater carbon sequestration benefit over what would occur naturally or by utilizing less intensive forest-management practices.

Judge Riley also noted that without timber harvesting and milling in California, the state would need to rely on imported lumber for 100 percent of its needs and that such reliance could result in more, not less, harmful emissions. The court concluded that California-grown wood products provide a wide array of environmental benefits and upheld the validity of the state’s strict forest management laws and regulations.

Additional research regarding the carbon sequestration benefits of active forest management can be viewed at [www.rethinkforests.com/research-library.html](http://www.rethinkforests.com/research-library.html).

*The California Forestry Association represents professionals committed to sustainable forestry and the protection of the state’s natural resources. CFA is committed to keeping the public informed on issues surrounding efforts to keep California forests healthy and well-managed for water, wildlife, wildfire protection and climate change benefit.*

*Sierra Pacific Industries is a third-generation family owned forest products company based in Anderson, California. The firm owns and manages nearly 1.9 million acres of timberland in California and Washington, and is the second largest lumber producer in the United States. Sierra Pacific Industries is committed to managing its lands in a responsible and sustainable manner to protect the environment while providing quality wood products and renewable power for consumers.*