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Arizona activists sue to block management on private California forestland

*Allegations ignore Calif. Air Resources Board findings on forestry providing
a net carbon sequestration benefit*

Sacramento Calif., January 28, 2009 – The Arizona-based Center for Biological Diversity yesterday filed seven new lawsuits to block active management on private forestlands in California. The suits allege that the Calif. Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection failed to analyze carbon emissions under the Calif. Environmental Quality Act. This litigation is being brought despite the fact that the California Air Resources Board has found that of the 165 business sectors in California only one, forestry, provides a net carbon sequestration benefit and that the harvest plans cited provide significant data on the carbon sequestration benefits of the management practices detailed in the plans.

According to CARB, private forestlands sequester in excess of 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually. All other business sectors are net carbon emitters. This latest litigation appears to be a new twist on advancing an old agenda and a legal tactic to prevent landowners from sustainably managing forests.

There is a wealth of scientific evidence that active forest management provides greater carbon sequestration benefits than a hands-off, preservation approach. The Climate Action Reserve forest carbon accounting protocols acknowledge even-age management as practiced in California and all active forest management techniques allowed in the state provide a carbon sequestration benefit. Increased forest management has also been shown to reduce wildfire severity and the emissions and other environmental consequences associated with high-intensity wildfire.

The court will ultimately decide whether the California Dept. of Forestry (CDF) performed proper due diligence in approving the timber harvest plans in question, but the carbon sequestration benefit of active forest management on private land should no longer be in doubt given the exhaustive efforts of CARB and the Environmental Protection agency to analyze and demonstrate the sequestration benefit already being provided by the forestry sector.

By continuing to file lawsuits with a singular objective using multiple tactics and thereby obstructing fuel-reduction efforts and sustainable forestry practices, the CBD has proven its focus lies squarely with advancing a preservationist agenda rather than conserving natural resources. With California's forestry infrastructure in decline and the cost of fuel reduction and wildland firefighting increasing as a result, it is time for California's courts and legislators to put an end to out-of-state lawsuits that clearly are inconsistent with the best interests California's environment and communities.

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.

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