



File Code: 2400

Date: **MAY 20 2014**

Honorable Steve Bullock
Governor of State of Montana
State Capitol, P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Bullock:

Thank you for your letter of April 7, 2014, requesting the designation of landscape-scale areas on national forests in Montana to address insect or disease threats under Section 602 of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591a), as added by section 8204 of the Agricultural Act of 2014.

The Secretary delegated the authority to designate landscape-scale insect and disease areas under Section 602 to me. I have determined that the seven large landscape areas that you requested to be designated under Section 602, with some slight modifications to three of those seven areas to remove two 6th level Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs) that didn't meet the criteria and remove two other 6th level HUCs that were incorrectly identified, meet one or more of the following criteria in Section 602:

- The area is experiencing decline of forest health based on annual forest health surveys;
- The area is at risk of substantial tree mortality over the next 15 years based on the National Insect and Disease Risk Map; or
- The area is one in which hazard trees pose imminent risk to public infrastructure, health or safety.

Based on this determination, I have hereby designated each of these areas, excluding Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, as a landscape-scale insect and disease area under Section 602(d). A map showing the designated areas is attached. This letter of designation, the map showing the designated areas as well as other documents pertaining to your request will be posted on <http://www.fs.fed.us/farbill/>.

Designation under Section 602 will allow us to further evaluate these landscape areas for potential treatments to reduce the risk or extent of, or increase resilience to, insect or disease infestation in accordance with Sections 602(d).

Again, thank you for your request to designate landscape areas that are experiencing declining forest health and for your continued interest in the management of the national forests in Montana. If you have any questions about the designation, please contact Tony Tooke, Associate Deputy Chief, at (202) 365-5648 or by email at ttooke@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

THOMAS L. TIDWELL
Chief

Enclosure

