

*The following statement was read as public testimony by Jennifer Marshall of The Marshall Plan on behalf of Howard Gross, Forest Guild Executive Director, at the April 6, 2009 hearing before the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board (EIB). The reason for the hearing was to determine whether the EIB would act in response to a petition from the New Energy Economy, New Mexico Environmental Law Center, and other petition supporters to adopt new regulations to reduce global warming emissions at the state level.*

This statement is being delivered on behalf of Howard Gross, Executive Director of the Forest Guild. The Forest Guild is a national professional organization headquartered in Santa Fe with more than 700 members who collectively manage over 41 million acres of forestland. Our mission is to practice and promote ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them.

The Guild is involved nationally in shaping climate change policy and forestry to ensure our forests can be resilient and adapt to climate change. Locally, this past November we organized the New Mexico Forestry and Climate Change Workshop, which was attended by 130 people.

Modification of our society's behavior to reduce greenhouse gases emissions is paramount. While we all must take individual actions to reduce our carbon footprint, these individual actions alone will not reduce our emissions enough. Our government must act to cause a larger reduction. Thus, the Forest Guild urges the EIB to adopt science-based regulations that set statewide limits on greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change causes stress to New Mexico's forests through more extreme droughts, higher temperatures, and the synergy between moisture and temperature. The cumulative effect over a number of years is increased stress on trees, poor growth, and low vigor.

New Mexico's forests are already denser now than at any other previous time due to more than a century of fire suppression, logging, and grazing practices. Climate change is amplifying the impacts of this departure from historic forest conditions—impacts that increase in denser forests with reduced vigor, impacts such as insect outbreaks and extreme fires. Insect ranges are expanding northward and into higher elevations, with insect infestation outbreaks becoming more extensive

and severe, in part because of warming temperatures. Similarly, the length of the fire season and the number of large fires across the West matches the pattern and trend of spring and summer temperature increases.

New Mexicans rely on our forests for wood products, water, biodiversity, recreation, aesthetics, and more. Climate change threatens this. Hopefully, this information will help you understand yet another reason to act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.