



Office of the Under Secretary

Natural Resources and Environment
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250-0108

May 18, 2026

THE HONORABLE JACK BERGMAN
United States House of Representatives
566 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Bergman,

Thank you for your April 27, 2026, letter to Secretary Brooke Rollins, regarding the proposed reorganization of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service. This is an exciting opportunity to re-evaluate how the USDA's Forest Service works, the services and opportunities that it provides, and how we serve the American people and steward our shared landscapes. I appreciate your support for the reorganization and its goals. I am responding on behalf of the Secretary.

In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan there are two sites being evaluated for closure. In Houghton, Michigan, there are five research buildings being evaluated. The facilities have \$440,000 in deferred maintenance. There are three employees at this site and the lease ends in less than two years. The Forest Service is evaluating options to determine if it is possible to collocate displaced employees in nearby government or university partner buildings. These are proposed closures and the Forest Service has not yet finalized any decisions.

Across the entire Forest Service, the reality is the budget cannot sustain the number of facilities the Agency has, let alone the \$3 billion in deferred maintenance. The Agency is taking a hard look at the cost of each facility, its utilization, and its deferred maintenance needs, while supporting its people. These decisions are about facilities and upkeep, not jobs or research programs.

Throughout reorganization, Forest Service scientists will continue to conduct research across the country, including on all our Experimental Forests and Ranges, which are critical to the quality and future of the Agency's research data. The facilities evaluations are about the choice to fund research over buildings and focus on leadership structure, not the scientific work itself. Consolidating stations under a single research leadership structure enables the Forest Service to coordinate priorities more effectively. It also ensures research supports the operational needs of the forests and grasslands without harming long term data or existing cooperative arrangements.

Thank you, again, for your letter. If you have additional questions, please have a member of your staff contact USDA's Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095 or ocr@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Michael K. Boren', written over a horizontal line.

Michael K. Boren
Under Secretary
Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture