

# Take Action to Save Urban Forestry Programs

WASHINGTON, DC (March 13, 2008) – The Alliance for Community Trees is joining together with 15 national organizations in opposing the drastic cuts proposed for the Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF) in the president's FY 2009 federal budget. The proposed 82% cut would leave the national U&CF program with only \$5 million in funds for FY 2009 to deliver assistance to all 50 states and territories.

Many forestry programs experienced sharp cuts in the president's budget, but U&CF was among the greatest. Forestry advocates have been more vocal this year than ever, urging Congress to fix the way that the federal government funds fire suppression, which has eaten into the agency's technical assistance programs and research capacity.

"If there is any doubt, a \$5 million national budget is like being told by the doctor that you have one month to live," said ACT executive director Alice Ewen Walker. "With million-tree campaigns launching in cities across the US, it is hard to understand why the federal government would pull back now from an issue that is central to the sustainability and health of our cities."

ACT is urging all of its member organizations to take action to contact congressional members this spring. An effective

approach is to contact your local district office and request an appointment to brief the staff on your concerns. Elected officials are interested to know how the federal program impacts their district or state and why it is relevant to constituents.

Many state forestry agencies rely on funds from the federal U&CF program to provide assistance and cost-share grants to communities. If you have ever received training, technical assistance, or funding from your state urban and community forestry program, you have benefitted from the federal investment in the Forest Service U&CF program.

## How to Take Action:

Sign on as a local supporter to the Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition's budget request, which urges \$50 million for the Urban and Community Forestry Program and an investment of \$8 million in urban forest research.

Fax a letter to your representative and senators. Urge them to take action to restore funding to the U&CF Program.

Request a meeting with the district office for your representative and senators. Brief them on urban forest issues in their district and tell them how you have used U&CF programs and technical assistance to make your city and state better.