

**For Immediate Release:**  
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**Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman Sues to Protect California's Roadless Areas**  
*Complaint Alleges Forest Service Violated National Forest Management Act and National Environmental Policy Act*

**Sacramento** – Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman and Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. today filed a U.S. District Court complaint contesting four Southern California forest management plans. In August 2007, the United States Forest Service denied California's appeals of management plans for the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests.

"Time and again we have tried to hold the Forest Service to their word on the roadless policy, time and again they have failed to live up to their promises," Chrisman said. "Following months of trying to work with them and establish what we believe to be reasonable management plans for Southern California's forests, we were afforded no alternative but to file suit."

"The United States Forest Service adopted illegal forest management plans that threaten California's pristine national forests with road construction and oil drilling," Attorney General Brown said. "The Forest Service should scrap these destructive forest plans and protect California's natural areas as required by law."

The four Southern California forests represent more than 3.5 million acres of national forest lands. While much of these lands have Wilderness designations, other protections or have already experienced various kinds of development, approximately one million acres are identified as roadless areas. Of that, about half of the remaining forest land, or 500,000 acres, could be contemplated under the plans for road construction projects contrary to the state's roadless policy.

The complaint, filed today through the California Attorney General's Office, contends that Forest Service management plans for four Southern California forests violate both the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

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## USFS Roadless Suit 2.

Specifically, it identifies five claims of relief that allege the Forest Service failed to consider the state's objectives and adhere to written assurances, failed to conduct proper environmental analyses, failed to identify the potential impacts of roads, failed to address the impact from increased oil drilling on habitat and wildlife, including the California Condor, and failed to analyze a reasonable range of alternatives.

Following the denial of California's appeals of the four Southern California forest management plans, Gov. Schwarzenegger sent a letter to then United States Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns. In the Aug. 3, 2007 letter the Governor expressed his dissatisfaction.

"Your recent denial is unacceptable and places the protection of valuable land in greater jeopardy. Frankly, it is not too much to ask for the Forest Service to do the right thing and live up to its own assurances," Gov. Schwarzenegger wrote. "Please take the necessary action to ensure that California's forests are safeguarded for generations to come and resolve this important issue before any more time and resources are expended. The people of California deserve nothing less."

On Sept. 6, 2007, Secretary Johanns wrote back to the Governor asking that the state file a petition, "Please accept my personal assurance that, if the state submits a petition, the Department and the Forest Service will work diligently, cooperatively, and expeditiously with the State to find lasting protection for these inventoried roadless areas that is acceptable to the State of California."

The state's long held position remains that the petition process lacks certainty for protecting California's forests. On Sept. 20, 2007, Johanns resigned his position as U.S. Agriculture Secretary to run for a U.S. Senate seat.

## BACKGROUND:

Between January 2005 and April 2006, Secretary Chrisman exchanged letters with former Regional Foresters Jack Blackwell and Bernie Weingardt in which both foresters in separate letters assured him that the forest plans would be issued so that roads would only be built in the specified circumstances. This standard was later the basis for a policy forwarded by Gov. Schwarzenegger that would create a California Specific Rule.

In April 2006, the Forest Service issued forest management plans that envisioned the building of roads in four Southern California forests. These plans directly contradicted the written assurances that the two regional foresters gave Secretary Chrisman.

USFS Roadless Suit 2.

On July 13, 2006, the Resources Agency appealed to the Forest Service, contending that its forest management plans for the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests do not reflect commitments made to preserve the roadless characteristics of Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). In addition, the Resources Agency held that the plans failed to consider appropriate mapping standards under NEPA and NFMA for all official and unofficial routes in the IRAs.

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Attachments available at [www.resources.ca.gov](http://www.resources.ca.gov)

1. **U.S. District Court Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief.**
2. **Governor Schwarzenegger letter to Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns**
3. **Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns letter to Governor Schwarzenegger**
4. **Four letters between Secretary Chrisman and U.S. Regional Foresters Blackwell and Weingardt**