



United States Department of Agriculture


Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

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Mr. Keith Groves  
Chairman  
Trinity County Board of Supervisors  
Post Office Box 1613  
Weaverville, California 96093

Trinity County  
Board of Supervisors  
By: 

Dear Chairman Groves:

Thank you for your letter of January 17, 2018, regarding difficulties caused by vacant positions in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service (FS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices in your area. I apologize for the delayed response.

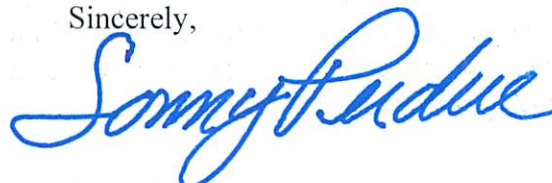
I appreciate your work on the Trinity County Collaborative with FS and NRCS. Working together to solve management issues is the most effective way to successfully manage for healthy and productive lands.

I understand your concerns around vacant FS and NRCS positions and the delays in completing critical work that these vacancies may cause. Over the last year, we have been working to better serve the American people by ensuring our programs are delivered more efficiently, effectively, and with integrity. To that end, I have developed several reform and restructuring initiatives spanning the Department. Accomplishing our goals requires both new and additional skills, as well as realignment of resources.

With respect to NRCS, I have approved their strategic hiring proposal and they are in the process of filling vacancies within their available resources. With respect to FS, I have approved filling several select priority positions and am currently conducting a comprehensive review of FS's strategic hiring proposal. I believe that in the long run, as a result of these initiatives, USDA agencies will be better positioned to exercise wise stewardship of our National Forests and lands and resolve natural resource issues, thereby increasing rural prosperity.

Again, thank you for writing and for your work on this issue. If you have any further questions, please contact Robert Velasco, Acting Deputy Chief for Business Operations, at (202) 205-1707.

Sincerely,



Sonny Perdue  
Secretary