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News Release

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AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK NAMES JAY JENSEN AS DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the appointment of Jay Jensen as USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE). In this position, Jensen will have responsibility for the U.S. Forest Service (FS), which manages 193 million acres of National Forest System lands and provides assistance to the more than 10 million family-forest landowners in this country.

The NRE mission area includes the FS and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS is the federal agency with primary responsibility for working with private landowners in conserving, maintaining and improving their natural resources.

"Jay Jensen brings the combination of on-the-ground and government experience that we need in this role," said Vilsack. "He is a forester and wildland firefighter with an extensive background in policy, management, and legislation. I'll be looking to Jay's leadership as we address the health of our forests. This is a top priority for USDA because it relates to several critical challenges—the intensity of forest fires, climate change, biomass and renewable energy, clean water and revitalizing forest-dependent communities."

Since May 2005, Jensen has been Executive Director of the Council of Western State Foresters/Western Forestry Leadership Coalition. The Coalition is a federal-state governmental partnership. Jensen had served earlier as the Coalition's Government Affairs Director.

He has also served as Senior Forestry Advisor for the Western Governors Association, where he was responsible for the biomass energy program. Before that, as lead forestry advisor for the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture, Jensen helped develop programs under the 2002 Farm Bill. He has also served as lead policy analyst for the National Association of State Foresters.

Jensen holds a B.S. degree from the University of California at Los Angeles and an M.S. in Forestry from Colorado State University.

A southern California native, Jensen will be moving to the D.C. area with his wife Shawna Friedman and their young daughter Kayden.

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