



INCREASING THE PACE, EXPANDING THE SCOPE, AND
IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONSERVATION

MEASURE: SB 1511
EXHIBIT: 47
2012 SESSION S ENV. & NAT. RESOURCES
DATE: 2-2-12 PAGES: 2
SUBMITTED BY: Bobby Cochran

January 30, 2012

Re: HB 4126/ SB 1511 / Ecosystem Services Markets

Dear members of the Oregon Legislature:

The Willamette Partnership is excited to support House Bill 4126 and Senate Bill 1511. The Partnership is a non-profit coalition of business, agricultural, environmental, local government, tribal, academic, and other leaders dedicated to expanding the pace and scope of conservation. We have been working for the last 5 years to help market-based efforts link conservation with new economic opportunities for Oregon's businesses, farmers, foresters, and ranchers.

Across Oregon, communities from Hillsboro to St. Helens and from the Rogue Valley to the Klamath Basin are striving to build new approaches to get the clean water, clean air, and natural places to play that make Oregon what it is. For market-based approaches to succeed, they need three basic things:

- 1) Clear signals for state and federal government that market-based approaches are both allowable and desirable;
- 2) The tools and science that links a landowner producing environmental benefits to public and private investors who want to "purchase" those benefits; and
- 3) Organizations working with landowners to help them create high quality conservation projects and with investors to ensure the delivery of verified environmental benefits that can meet their regulatory or other investment objectives.


In Oregon, the Willamette Partnership, and agencies, and others have made significant progress in all three areas, but HB 4126/SB 1511 provides clear direction and authority for state agencies and others to pursue market-based approaches at scale. The kinds of market-based approaches these bills enable will have tangible benefits on the pocketbooks of Oregonians.

For example, a rural municipality in Southern Oregon is looking at almost \$20 million to upgrade a wastewater facility to reduce nutrient pollution to a major river system. With a population of 42,000 people, a median household income of \$46,000/year, and a county unemployment rate of 13.6%, this translates into a significant increase in every home's sewer bill. This is a real economic impact, and a common occurrence across sewer, water, and electricity bills in Oregon. Market-based approaches open up new conversations about how communities can direct investment in the natural resources that provide the same, or better environmental benefits than concrete and steel. And the best part of investments in this "green

infrastructure” is that for every \$1 million, 16-23 jobs are created, and every dollar spent cycles through a community creating economic value.

We need bills like HB 4126/SB 1511 to provide those clear signals from the state to government, non-profit, and private actors across the nation and state that Oregon is *the* leader in market-based approaches to conservation. Please let us know if you have any follow-on questions. Thank you for your support of HB 4126/SB 1511.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bobby Cochran', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bobby Cochran
Executive Director