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SUBMITTED BY: Joe Whitworth

January 31, 2012

To: Members of the Oregon Legislature

Re: Support for HB 1511 and SB 4126: Strengthening Oregon's Ecosystems Through Market-Based Solutions

The Freshwater Trust has a long history of working with private landowners in rural communities in Oregon to complete restoration actions that support freshwater health. Lack of adequate funding for such actions is a persistent barrier to conservation at pace and scale. Environmental markets have emerged in recent years as a promising innovation to increase conservation budgets in Oregon.

Since 2007, The Freshwater Trust has joined an active group of partners in Oregon, participating in both the Willamette Partnership's Counting on the Environment working group, and the Senate Bill 513 working group to build and test the policies and infrastructure to ensure credible market transactions will lead to real environmental improvements. As a result of these previous efforts, the fundamental elements of a working environmental marketplace are in place ready for implementation in Oregon.

The Freshwater Trust is actively working with several municipalities in the state to help them meet strict new regulatory limits on water temperature at their wastewater facilities using an ecosystem services approach. With credible market infrastructure and broad support from environmental, municipal, and regulatory stakeholders in place, Oregon, more than any other state in the country is ready to attract new private investment in conservation.

The Freshwater Trust supports HB 1511 and SB 4126 because they signal to state agencies, non-profits, local governments, and the business community that Oregon is committed to developing credible market-based ecosystem services approaches to satisfying regulatory obligations. The Freshwater Trust is committed to working with state agencies and other partners to ensure these approaches are implemented with the rigor necessary to meet specific regulatory targets and guarantee the credibility of market-based ecosystem services solutions. Success will attract much-needed new private resources that will help improve freshwater health, create jobs in rural communities and generate significant cost savings for Oregon.

Sincerely,

Joe Whitworth
President

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renewable energy.

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