



Oregon

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Oregon Sustainability Board
Secretary of State Kate Brown, Chair

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MEASURE: SB 1511
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SUBMITTED BY: Sec. of State Kate Brown

Memo to: Oregon Legislators

From: Kate Brown, Chair, Oregon Sustainability Board

Re: Please support SB 1511 and HB 4126 – Ecosystem Services and Markets

Date: January 25, 2012

This session two identical bills relating to ecosystem services and markets have been introduced. SB 1511 is sponsored by the Senate Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources. HB 4126 is sponsored by Representatives Garrett, Gilliam, Bailey and Read.

The Oregon Sustainability Board has been involved in the development of this legislation and is anxious to see it adopted. The Board sponsored the Ecosystem Services (SB 513) Workgroup, who met for about a year and presented a formal report to the legislature. These bills implement many of the recommendations from the group.

The Sustainability Board has a strong interest in sustaining Oregon's natural resource lands for forestry, agriculture, and ecological purposes. However, we are concerned that if rural lands do not produce income for their owners, these lands will deteriorate or be converted to development. Most landowners cannot afford to keep and manage their lands to provide the ecosystem services that benefit all Oregonians. Developing viable markets for the ecosystem services on these lands, including carbon sequestration, clean and abundant water, clean air, fish and wildlife habitat will help supplement traditional revenue sources and result in more economically viable rural economies.

HB 4126 and SB 1511 also offer great opportunities to address the environmental challenges associated with urban sprawl with by using natural infrastructure as an alternative to traditional engineered projects. A vibrant ecosystem service market can help facilitate that goal.

It is important to emphasize that the bills have no fiscal impact, do not impose new regulations, or relieve anyone from compliance with existing regulations. They simply encourage agencies to find new ways to achieve better environmental results more efficiently than the current system.

Thank you for your support.