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Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee;

My name is Michael Barnes. I am a family forest owner in Yamhill County and a consulting forester representing a number of landowners in several counties. I have been assisting landowners for over 30 years. I served as the President of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association for 4 years and currently serve as the Director of Woodland Carbon Company.

During those 30 years of experience I have been privileged to have the support of Department of Forestry. I have seen the lean times when budget constraints limited the support to family forest owners and was pleased by restitution of the program during the last biennium. Family forest owners have the commercial forest resources that can contribute needed logs to local mills. The gatekeepers to this economic opportunity are the Stewardship Foresters. They review and process the Notifications, which are required prior to a harvest activity. They also provide assistance to ensure compliance with the Forest Practices Act. This compliance is needed in order to ensure the forest resources of the state continue to be sustainably managed.

I as a forest owner and consultant can now call a Stewardship Forester and receive personal assistance. Two years ago that was not possible. The Stewardship Foresters were few in number. The restoration of these crucial positions has contributed to an increase in economic activity by family forest owners. To maintain this economic stability and stimulus I would urge you to, at a minimum, support the budget level recommended by the Governor.

I appreciate the opportunity to address you today,

Michael Barnes
Family Forest Owner