

# Committee for Family Forestlands

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April 18, 2013

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Oregon Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Supporting letter for the Oregon Department of Forestry's budget request

Dear Subcommittee Members:

The Committee for Family Forestlands, a standing committee commissioned by the Oregon legislature to advise the State Forester and the Oregon Board of Forestry on issues relevant to some 70,000 family forestland owners in the state, comes before you today in support of the Oregon Department of Forestry's budget request for the next biennium. Typically our attention is directed to the Board of Forestry and the State Forester. We are here to underscore the importance of the work of ODF to family forestlands and their owners.

CFF members represent all geographic areas in Oregon as well as a wide range of private and agency interests related to family forestlands. We are familiar with the careful and well-considered budget that the Department has developed, and we stand united in our support of the Department's budget request. We would like to call your attention to several key elements of the budget request.

- 1) Reinvestment. We would like to thank this body for the reinvestment made in the Department's Private Forestry program in the last legislature. That reinvestment allowed ODF to rebuild capacity in field level staff and services, programs that directly affect private forestland owners. In particular, these reinvestments provide the kind of technical assistance, information and support services that enable family forestland owners to manage their forestlands in ways that benefit all Oregonians. The reinvestments you made in private forestry programs support small landowners in their efforts to do the right thing as well as provide the Department with the capacity to fairly implement the Forest Practices Act, which helps all landowners meet their obligations to Oregon's current and future generations. We urge you to maintain a level of funding that enables the Department to continue providing needed assistance to small and other private forestland owners.
- 2) Wildfire. The CFF has long been actively engaged in Departmental discussions about the best ways to provide wildfire protection. This includes participation in the development and review of proposals before the legislature this year. We strongly support the Wildfire Protection Act. We understand and advocate for the complex funding stream that balances public and private benefits and public and private costs. In addition, over the last two years the CFF has paid particular attention to Eastside forest issues important to

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family forestlands and their owners. We recognize that fire and fire protection are significant Eastside concerns. The Wildfire Protection Act in particular and the base general fund support in the ODF budget request are essential in meeting needs related to fire management across Oregon.


- 3) Efficiency and effectiveness. Finally CFF would like to go on record as supportive of ODF's efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of private forestry programs and services. CFF has provided input to these efforts, reviewed progress periodically, and commented on such efforts formally and informally. We believe that changes like a web based notification of operations system, the development of unified plan approaches, and enhanced monitoring allow the Department to provide more direct services to landowners while improving regulatory oversight and performance related to the Forest Practices Act and should continue to be encouraged.

While we have called out these several items for particular attention, we want to underscore our general support for the overall budget request of \$314.3 million. As one CFF member reminded us, the overall investment of general fund dollars by Oregon in natural resources is relatively small. In forestry, even smaller. Yet all of us in Oregon love and value our forests and the benefits they provide.

Family forestlands are the ones most proximate to urban areas, make up much of the urban/wildland interface, and are the forests most familiar to Oregonians in the areas where we live, work and play. Family forestland owners may have diverse goals for their lands, but many public values accrue from these lands. Family forestland owners are committed to keeping forestland in forests. The budget request made by the Oregon Department of Forestry is a careful budget that will allow ODF to do its work and continue to perform valuable services for Oregon and her forests.

Sincerely,

Committee for Family Forestlands



Craig Shinn, Chair



Susan Watkins, Vice-Chair

cc: Oregon Board of Forestry Members  
Doug Decker, State Forester

Sen. Chris Edwards, Co-Chair  
Rep. Ben Unger, Co-Chair  
Sen. Jackie Dingfelder  
Sen. Chuck Thomsen  
Rep. Jules Bailey  
Rep. Bruce Hanna

*The Committee for Family Forestlands is a statutory committee appointed by the Board of Forestry to provide advice and recommendations regarding family forests and includes family forestland owners from different areas of the state, environmental organization and forest industry representatives, a citizen-at-large and ex-officio members representing the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Extension Service, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, small landowner associations, the US Forest Service, and logging/forestry consulting interests.*