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**Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
February 20, 2013**

**House Bill 5011 (Department of Energy budget)**

*Statement of Bruce Taylor / Director, Oregon Biodiversity Program, Defenders of Wildlife*

I am here today to support the governor's request for \$500,000 from the General Fund for development of a landscape-level plan to help guide siting of new energy and transmission facilities in eastern Oregon.

This would implement one of the top priorities in the governor's 10-Year Energy Action Plan and begin to lay the foundations for a more proactive approach to energy siting. Up-front planning would reduce the potential for conflicts, streamline the permitting process, and help ensure that needed development occurs in ways that are consistent with the state's other policy priorities.

The siting team recommendations that came out of the governor's task force, which are reflected in the final version of the governor's plan, lay out the rationale for this:

Too often, individual siting decisions [for new energy facilities] lack context for evaluating tradeoffs among conflicting public policy priorities, and decision makers struggle to understand cumulative impacts on wildlife and other natural resource values. On the other side, developers often embark on projects without a clear understanding of the nature and magnitude of potential conflicts and how decision-makers will weigh tradeoffs.

In the absence of any overarching conservation framework, requirements for mitigation of wildlife impacts for development are cumbersome and ad hoc, with high transaction costs to developers and few assurances that mitigation actions will adequately offset impacts with quantifiable environmental benefits...

Landscape-level planning can provide a means to balance the need to site new energy development and transmission facilities with environmental constraints and other conservation values, helping to create a shared vision for long-term interaction of development and conservation...

The governor's budget request would fund the critical first step toward creation of that shared vision. We hope you will join us in supporting this effort.

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