



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Forestry

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Honorable Chris Edwards, Chair
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301



"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

RE: SB 544

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. ODF is neutral on Senate Bill 544.

As drafted, the legislation would eliminate the limitation for liability for damages resulting from voluntary restoration projects designed to improve fish and wildlife habitat and aid in watershed restoration. This bill would cause a disincentive for private forest landowners to continue to implement voluntary forest practice measures under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. ODF would like to emphasize that voluntary forest practice measures, such as leaving wider than required stream buffers or improving fish passage at stream crossings is a key component of achieving the desired environmental outcomes on forestland. Private landowners have implemented thousands of voluntary forest practice measures at an estimated investment of nearly \$100 million.

Senate Bill 544 would also cause confusion between statutes administered by ODFW (ORS 496.270) and ODF (ORS 527.785). The bill would amend language in ORS 496.270 but technically would not affect the provisions in ORS 527.785, which relate to exemptions from liability for large woody debris left on the property after forest management activity. How these two statutes would continue to interact is unclear in the bill language.

We would be happy to work with members of the committee to address these issues in the bill.

Sincerely,

Peter Daugherty
Private Forests Division Chief
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c: Doug Decker, State Forester
Richard Whitman, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Advisor
Agency Executive Team
ODF Legislative Tracking Unit