



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON**

April 16, 2015

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Senator Richard Devlin and Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Committee

Re: HB 5019 – Department of Forestry Budget: COMMENTS

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League understands the many values of our federal, state and private forest lands. We especially appreciate their value as the source of most Oregonians' drinking water. In our "Water in Oregon" Part 2 Report, Jake Gibbs of Lone Rock Timber stated "The cleanest water comes from a well-managed forest." We agree. Therefore, we support the following Policy Option Packages:

POP 132: Research and Monitoring. As with our testimony on other natural resource agency budgets, good scientific data is critical to good policy decisions and management. We support the General Fund ask for this POP.

POP 153: Water Quality: Since our focus for this agency is on water and we understand the importance of monitoring, we support the General Funds ask. We recognize the nexus between the work of the department on forest roads and the NOAA/EPA CZARA federal monies, so it is important that the department address this issue—for our fish and the many humans who depend on clean drinking water that begins in our forests. We have supported the funds in multiple agencies related to the Clean Water Partnership and we do so in this budget as well.

We remind the committee of the Department of Forestry's mission:

*"To serve the people of Oregon by protecting, managing, and promoting stewardship of Oregon's forests to enhance environmental, economic, and community sustainability."*

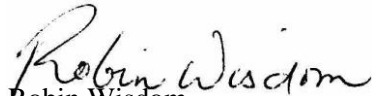
Although we will not comment on other specific packages since the League has not studied the business of forestry as a separate issue, we would note our support for Stewardship Foresters in the base budget at current service levels. Their work to reach out to our small woodland owners and address some of the urban interface challenges is very important to the long term health of those small forests, as well as our larger ones. Assuring that the Forest Practices Act is enforced is important to our members. We are impressed by the new efficiency procedures that have allowed these foresters to get on the ground quickly and help the industry with quick, but accurate, answers to questions that necessarily arise from forest practices.

We do want to see the department address the issues around herbicide spray—both the practice and notice to nearby home owners. Our Leagues in Curry County, Lincoln County, the Rogue Valley and the Umpqua are especially concerned. Should the limited legislation that may be passed this session not really address this very real drinking water and public health concern, we will expect the department to find administrative ways to address this serious issue. If the monies requested for the Forest Electronic Notification System (FERNS) will enhance this effort, we can support this one-time funding.

As with agricultural land, the League is working hard to assure our industrial forestlands are available for today and future generations. We support land use Goal 4 and are very concerned about the increase in development of urban interface lands. We understand the conflicts between these two uses and will continue to be vigilant and supportive of ways to protect these important industrial lands.

Thank you for considering our requests.

Sincerely,

  
Robin Wisdom  
President

  
Peggy Lynch  
Natural Resources Coordinator

cc: Doug Decker, State Forester  
Richard M. Whitman, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Director