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Boise Wood Products



Boise Cascade

April 5, 2017

Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Representative Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Department of Forestry Federal Forest Restoration Program

Dear Sen. Devlin and Rep. Nathanson,

I am writing to express support for funding the Oregon Department of Forestry Federal Forest Restoration Program for the 2017-2019 biennium budget. This investment is important for the continued restoration of National Forests and revitalization of rural, resource based economies across the state.

Boise Cascade has more than 1,100 employees working in 10 manufacturing facilities located in eastern and southwestern Oregon. In Northeast Oregon (NEO), we have 5 manufacturing facilities that depend on a sustainable supply of small-to-medium diameter log volume that is the natural output from federal forest restoration projects. Our operations are surrounded by federal forests yet in NEO we transport wood from over 250 miles away to maintain our operations.

The Northern Blue Mountains Forests in Northeast Oregon (NEO) consist of an intermix of public and private forests that have a rich history of management and natural disturbances. The National Forests consist of the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests and cover approximately 3.2 million acres which is 71% of all forest lands in Northeastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington. These National Forests have only produced about 55 million board feet per year, or about 9% of the gross annual growth. The forests surround many local communities that have experienced a significant downturn in employment that is directly associated with the reduction in timber availability from the publically owned National Forests. Since we have been suppressing fires for over 100 years and have taken a different, more passive, approach

to management since the early 1990s, we have seen an increase in density, reduced crown spacing, and increased shade-tolerant species.

Over the past four years, we have been involved with the FFRP Program. Specifically, I participate in the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman, and Blue Mountain Forest Partners (Malheur) collaboratives and work directly with the Forest Service on project implementation across the Blue Mountains. These funds have contributed to increased activities across these forests such as expedited timber marking, Lidar collection, and archeological surveys. Each of these investments has assisted the Forest Service in moving forward in planning and implementation of these projects in a timely manner. We anticipate that with continued funding, these Forests will continue to benefit and learn efficiencies that will continue to expedite project planning and implementation.

I believe that funding this program is important to the continuity of the federal program with multiple opportunities that can be leveraged to ensure that the investments are truly providing a significant return on investment (ROI) for the state, forests, and local communities. I encourage the committee to consider funding this program and strongly encourage the Oregon Department of Forestry to leverage the Good Neighbor Authority which allows the state to plan and implement projects on National Forests. This should be a priority, especially since the State now has a Master Agreement with Forest Service that can expedite Good Neighbor Projects across the state. I think that this is a great opportunity for Oregon Department of Forestry to create some additionality with their investments to ensure continuous benefits from the efficiencies that are found through this investment. It is important that the lessons learned from previous iterations of this program are incorporated into the newly re-authorized program to ensure that the return on investment is more than just a one-time return.

Investments that function as a building block will help the Forest Service and State to realize quantifiable returns and a faster, more efficient planning and implementation process for projects. I suggest that FFRP program for the 2017-2019 biennium focus on investments that cross forest boundaries, for example, in the 2014 Farm Bill, all national forests were given the authority to implement timber sales without fully marking them, thus saving the time needed for a crew to paint each tree and the cost of paint. Some forests, such as the Malheur National Forest, have been very successful in reducing their implementation costs through the use of this new tool. However, the forests just to the north of the Malheur (Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla) have yet to take advantage of this tool to reduce time and labor needed to implement timber sales. The new state funding should strongly encourage that any project it funds is designed to be building block for future efficiencies.

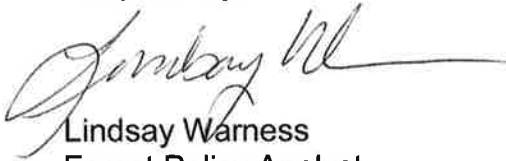
We appreciate the Department of Forestry's implementation of the Federal Forest Restoration Program over the past two biennium and strongly encourage you to continue to support this groundbreaking effort. Full funding for the Federal Forest

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Restoration Program in the 2017-2019 biennium is integral to improving the health and resilience of our federal forest lands, creating and sustaining restoration and stewardship jobs in rural communities, protecting unique habitat for fish and wildlife, and restoring public lands for the benefit of all Oregonians.

Thank you for supporting this important program.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lindsay Warness", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lindsay Warness
Forest Policy Analyst
Boise Cascade Company
1917 Jackson Avenue
La Grande, OR 97850

