

Date: February 22, 2017

To: Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

From: The Association of Oregon Counties

Subject: **AOC opposes Senate Bill 198.**

Please add to the records of the Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources these comments related to Senate Bill 198, which is on the committee's agenda for public hearing on February 22, 2017.

AOC, representing all 36 county governments, understands the need for resolution of difficult and often complex issues that arise in the natural resources policy arena. The use of valid scientific findings is vital to this process.

Nevertheless, AOC must **oppose Senate Bill 198** for the very reasons described by seven stakeholder groups (the Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Forest Industries Council, Oregonians for Food and Shelter, Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, Oregon Seed Council, Oregon Small Woodlands Association, and Associated Oregon Industries) in a joint letter dated August 29, 2016, submitted on the proposal. They concluded:

“...[We] are not in agreement that the process suggested by the Task Force will produce any better outcome than procedures already in place. Generally speaking, the broad, multi-disciplinary, ‘high impact’ questions proposed for study are inextricably linked to controversial policy issues and, in our experience, are not generally conducive to independent science review. But even if they were, we are not convinced that the process outlined in the Task Force report would produce truly unbiased independent scientific review. Rather, it threatens to be an additional expensive layer of review that, in the end, produces little in the way of consensus”.

Thank you for accepting these comments for the record.