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**Testimony SUPPORTING WITH MODIFICATIONS SB 198 before the Senate Committee for  
Environment and Natural Resources  
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I am an Associate Dean in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University and I am a Wildlife Ecologist and educator by training. I had the pleasure of serving as co-chair of the SB 202 Task Force on Independent Scientific Reviews for Natural Resources in the state of Oregon. The SB Task Force, composed of 13 scientists from Oregon's three main research institutions, industry, and non-governmental organizations, worked for nine months to produce our report. I want to acknowledge the support we received from the Institute for Natural Resources at OSU and a professional facilitator, Jane Barth, who provided invaluable assistance in facilitating our meetings and in preparing our report. I also want to thank the interim Committee for Environment and Natural Resources and their staff for drafting SB 198, which so closely aligns with the recommendations in our Task Force report.

**The Task Force supports adoption of SB 198 with two suggested modifications: (1) regarding appointing the Administrator of the Independent Scientific Review Secretariat, and (2) regarding funding of the Independent Scientific Review Fund.**

The SB 202 Task Force concluded that most single-agency scientific reviews can be met with existing state, federal, and academic resources, but review practices and capacity for conducting reviews vary among agencies. However, there is a need for independent scientific review of complex, multi-disciplinary issues in natural resources that span multiple agencies and are relevant to stakeholders, lawmakers, and natural resources managers. Existing resources are not adequate for these types of reviews. The growing distrust of science, the level of scientific literacy among Oregonians, and the proliferation of "alternative facts" will necessitate Oregon having an independent scientific review system that provides trusted analysis of the many complex problems facing policy makers and natural resources managers. These complex issues cannot be resolved using dueling science or incomplete understanding of the human and ecological systems underpinning natural resource management. SB 198 creates an independent scientific review process that is transparent and inclusive, that will focus on the most critical issues of statewide importance, and is both cost effective and flexible. Reviews conducted under this process will be future oriented, and have a high likelihood of positively influencing natural resources management in Oregon. We support adoption of SB 198, but offer two modifications.

**We recommend modification of SB 198 so that the Administrator of the Independent Scientific Review Secretariat be selected by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Independent Scientific Review Board, not the Governor.** The Administrator will have oversight of the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat, which provides the essential services on which the Board

depends to accomplish its mission. Having the Administrator serve at the pleasure of the Board rather than the Governor will insulate the Administrator and the Secretariat he/she oversees from political influence.

**We recommend modification of SB 198 so that the Independent Scientific Review Fund is funded by the state general fund and not through gifts, grants, or contributions from public or private sources.** This concern may be more a function of our understanding of how the fund would operate rather than the intent implied in SB 198. As currently written, the Independent Scientific Review Fund could receive gifts, grants, or contributions from other public or private sources. While the idea that affected industries or sectors or groups opposing those sectors might pay for scientific reviews, the SB 202 Task Force was very concerned about establishing a “pay to play” type of funding mechanism. Our extensive deliberations on this subject led us to believe that sources of funding outside of the state’s general fund would serve to reprioritize scientific issues or questions selected for review and could result in scientific review of topics that might otherwise be a low priority for review.

In closing, I want to thank the Committee for Environment and Natural Resources and its staff for developing SB 198 and I urge the committee to recommend for adoption the bill and offer our two modifications as possible improvements.