
Co-Chair Taylor & Co-Chair Reardon,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Oregon Department of Forestry's proposed budget cuts. My name is Matthew Brady and I grow timber, and raise commercial sheep in Douglas County. I strongly oppose the plan to increase the private landowner share of base protection costs to 55%. First, this concept drastically changes our established wildfire funding model, which was carefully set in place by Oregon law. Second, it discounts the contributions that private landowners already take to manage their properties in a way that reduces fuel loads and risk of wildfire, as well as the cost of maintaining their own firefighting equipment that is relied upon by ODF and Forest Protective Associations in wildfire emergencies. Last, it places a serious cost burden on the backs of landowners who are already struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Please do not approve Item #268 of the Rebalance Plan.

Matthew Brady

July 16, 2020

Oregon State Legislature
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
RE: Support for Oregon Department of Forestry Federal Forest Restoration Program

Dear Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon:

The undersigned organizations and individuals are writing to express our strong support for maintaining the Federal Forest Restoration Program (FFRP) within the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) as you undertake the rebalancing of the 2019-2021 biennial budget. Continuing this program is critical to the restoration of Oregon's federal forests, which also reduces wildfire risk to communities across the state.

Oregon has experienced a significant increase in the severity and duration of large wildfires in recent years. The past decade of fire seasons that start earlier, end later, and burn significantly more acres has strained the state's fire response capacity, significantly increased suppression costs, and proven that more must be done to proactively address the risk posed by unhealthy, departed conditions on fire prone forests. More than 60% of Oregon's forests are managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, and as much as 4.5 million acres of federal forest lands in Oregon need active restoration to achieve resilient landscapes.

The Federal Forest Restoration Program increases the amount of acres treated through thinning and prescribed fire that significantly reduce hazardous fuels, increase forest resiliency, and reduce the risk of fire to people and communities. The FFRP creates linkages and efficiencies that shorten the timelines for implementation through collaboration, innovative partnerships, and integration of science into planning and management. It also supports the development of a sustainable forest products infrastructure that provides living wage jobs in restoration and stewardship of federal forests. State FFRP investments and private and federal match have generated 40 jobs and \$3 million in GDP per year in each of the six years of the program. The program reduces the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, enhances fish and wildlife habitat, and produces timber supply for mills and forest products companies in our rural communities.

Maintaining adequate funding and coordinating capacity for FFRP would ensure its continued ability to capture, leverage, and deploy significant federal funds. Since 2016, ODF has been awarded \$11 million from the federal government to implement forest management projects developed by collaborative groups and FFRP coordinators. This federal match is likely to increase as part of the Shared Stewardship agreement signed in 2019 by Oregon and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Coupled with the Good Neighbor agreement between Oregon, the U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, Oregon is effectively poised to receive increased investment and greater budgetary and decision-making discretion on federal forests in the coming years.

However, if the fundamental staffing, contracting, and collaborative support components of FFRP are too far reduced, the State will be limited in its ability to capture this federal funding. Proposed reductions to seasonal crews in the program will delay implementation of restoration projects and generation of program income. Furthermore, the Partnership & Planning Coordinator position (vacated in March 2020 and located in ODF's Administrative Division) is essential to manage the program and secure and direct additional federal funds. We worry that proposed cuts to this program and its leadership capacity could hinder the receipt and utilization of funds provided to Oregon as part of any

federal stimulus package if the State lacked the program infrastructure to effectively administer resources.

We respect and understand the tremendous financial pressure and circumstances the legislature is operating under due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also recognize that budget reductions in all agencies will be necessary to balance the state budget, while maintaining support for essential services. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the FFRP is a strategic investment that protects public health and safety, provides economic stability and opportunity, attracts additional federal and private investment to the state, and prevents additional costs from arising in the coming biennia.

We express our continued gratitude to the legislature for your leadership during this time and for your careful review in making these difficult decisions. Thank you for your consideration to maintain basic support for this important program in the Oregon Department of Forestry. For questions, please contact Dylan Kruse at dkruse@sustainablenorthwest.org or (303) 328-7524 or Amelia Porterfield at a.m.porterfield@tnc.org or (503) 803-5863.

Respectfully,

Blue Mountains Forest Partners
Central Oregon Forest Stewardship Foundation
Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project
Harney County Restoration Project
Hood River Forest Collaborative
Iron Triangle LLC
Klamath Lake Forest Health Partnership
Lake County Resources Initiative
Lomakatsi Restoration Project
McKenzie Watershed Stewardship Group
Northern Blues Forest Collaborative
Ochoco Forest Restoration Collaborative
Ochoco Lumber
Oregon Environmental Council
Siuslaw National Forest Collaborative Groups
Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative
Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative
Sustainable Northwest
The Nature Conservancy
Wallowa Resources
Wasco Forest Collaborative
Western Environmental Law Center
Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative

July 21, 2020

OFB Opposition Testimony Item #268
Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Reardon, members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today opposing Item #268. By way of background, the Oregon Farm Bureau represents nearly 7,000 farm and ranch families across Oregon, many of whom are active contributors to rural fire protection districts and rangeland fire protection associations. As longtime stewards of the land, Oregon's farmers and ranchers know firsthand the devastating impacts wildfire can have on rural communities and the importance of proper land management to prevent fire from spreading on public and private lands. As such, OFB has a keen interest in the Oregon Department of Forestry's budget, and the ability of the state to protect Oregon from wildfire.

With this said, OFB firmly believes that the state and the public both owe a responsibility to contribute to fire suppression costs on both public and private land. As such, we have historically supported Oregon's equitable and fair approach of having both the state and landowners equally share base protection costs 50/50. OFB supports the state funding no less than 50% of the fire protection costs on ODF protected lands, with landowner in-kind contributions being counted as part of the landowner's 50% share. The 50/50 funding split for base fire protection is a reflection of the long history of shared ownership between the State of Oregon and private landowners in the fire program.

Item #268 seeks to inequitable change Oregon's established funding model by increasing the landowner share to 55% and decreasing the state's share to 45%.

Private landowners in Oregon already pay far more for fire protection than in other states and proactively manage their land to reduce the risk of fire. Adding an additional economic burden onto private landowners, not only runs counter to the spirit of fairness that is the foundation of Oregon's fire funding model, but places an increased burden on landowners who are already seriously struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Now is not the appropriate time to move forward with this concept. Wildfire funding is a complex policy discussion that should not be rushed through a special session. Moreover, honoring the original intent of Oregon's fire funding model, any effort to change cost share responsibilities should be a result of agreement between landowners and the state, not unilaterally imposed. Therefore, we urge the Committee to not move forward with Item #268 today.

Thank you very much. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Samantha Bayer
Policy Counsel
Oregon Farm Bureau
samantha@oregonfb.org



OREGON FARM BUREAU TESTIMONY

Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

July 22, 2020

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed budget cuts to Oregon's natural resource agencies as a result of COVID-19 related budget shortfalls. Like other Oregon industries, Oregon's farmers and ranchers have been hit hard by COVID-19 related economic impacts, as key markets dried up, supply chains were disrupted, and international trade ground to a halt. Despite these challenges, Oregon's farmers and ranchers are still farming, and working hard to bring safe, reliable, and sustainable food and fiber to local, regional, and international markets.

By way of background, Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is Oregon's largest grassroots agriculture association, representing over 6,000 farming and ranching families across the state. Our mission is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for our members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole.

Agriculture is the state's second largest traded sector industry, and the programs housed within Oregon's natural resources agencies are critical to our members' operations. While we understand that all agencies are going to need to "tighten their belts" to weather this economic crisis, we are concerned about cuts to some core program areas that will disproportionately impact our members and ultimately harm their ability to stay viable and survive the COVID-19 crisis. We ask for your help in supporting the agency programs needed to ensure Oregon's farmers and ranchers to stay in business throughout this crisis. Farms and ranches are the backbone of their local economies and supply critical goods and services needed during the pandemic.

We urge the Subcommittee to reconsider the following program area budget changes:

- **Oregon Department of Agriculture:**
 - *Predator Control Funding* (\$200,000 in ODA, \$200,000 in ODFW): Predators are a significant source of losses to livestock producers around the state. These dollars are leveraged at every level of government to provide crucial depredation support to landowners and communities.
 - *Invasive Species Council Funding* (\$280,000): The invasive species council conducts a comprehensive and coordinated effort to prevent, detect, control and eliminate invasive species harming the region's economy, health, and natural



resources. This work is critical to our natural resources industry and needs to remain well-funded.

- **Oregon Department of Forestry:**
 - *Rangeland Fire Protection Association Funding (\$185,000)*: RFPAs are the first line of defense against wildfires in many parts of Oregon. The state should continue to ensure they are funded to help quickly contain wildfires that otherwise may go unchecked and cause millions in damage to Oregon's natural resources and wildlife habitat.
 - *Increase Base Protection Cost Funding for Landowners (\$1,948,173)*: The 50/50 split between landowners and the state is fundamental to our wildfire protection system, and must be maintained.
- **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife:**
 - *Wolf Program (\$323,404)*: These dollars help support wolf-depredation compensation, non-lethal deterrence and technical assistance to landowners to implement the Oregon Wolf Plan. Livestock owners already bear a disproportionate burden of wolf reintroduction – eliminating this funding would be detrimental to landowner buy in to the wolf program.
- **Oregon Department of Water Resources:**
 - *Field Services Funding*: These field services dollars help fund the on-the-ground work that is critical to effective management of our state's water resources. This program is already severely underfunded, and further curtailments should not be considered.
 - *Measurement Cost Share (\$106,914)*
 - *Vacancy Savings (\$578,251)*
 - *Fund Shift (\$522,262)*
 - *Gaging Stations (\$27,186) and Observation Wells (\$50,000)*: Data collection is critical to management of our state's water resources, and we should not reduce funding that goes toward getting us the data we need to manage these resources in the long-term.
 - Further, we understand that OWRD is facing a budget shortfall due to increased litigation costs. We recognize the need for a comprehensive audit of the Department's programs and resources and support the legislature working to ensure that OWRD remains committed to its core priorities. However, cuts to key OWRD program areas without addressing the litigation expenses or reviewing the Department's prioritization of resources will only compound the issues caused by decades of underfunding and mission expansion. We urge you not to cut key field services that the Department needs to remain functional.

Contact: Mary Anne Cooper (maryanne@oregonfb.org)



Wednesday, July 22, 2020

“Co-Chair Taylor & Co-Chair Reardon,

We are engaged in production agriculture, owning a cattle ranch located in Grant County, Oregon. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on the Oregon Department of Forestry’s proposed budget cuts.

We are adamantly opposed to the suggested plan to increase the private landowner share of base protection costs to 55%. First, this concept drastically changes our established wildfire funding model, which was carefully set in place by Oregon law. Second, it discounts the contributions that private landowners already take to manage their properties in a way that reduces fuel loads and risk of wildfire. Last, it places a serious cost burden on the backs of landowners who are already struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic.

We have been shocked by the lack of understanding and interest the State of Oregon has had for private business during this pandemic. The State has no idea that private business must stay economically viable, despite having income levels drastically reduced by current events. This plan to increase our protection costs to 55% is just another example.

Please do not approve Item #268 of the Rebalance Plan.”

*Ken & Pat Holliday
Holliday Land & Livestock, Inc.*

Good morning to Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon, and members of the Sub-Committee.

My name is Kirk Shimeall, I am the Executive Director of Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, a nonprofit based in Corvallis, Oregon. We have a broad mission that supports different programs and collaboratives throughout the state. We serve as the host and fiscal administrator for a number of excellent projects, including the following:

- The Siuslaw Stewardship Watershed Restoration Program, in partnership with the Siuslaw National Forest
- The Western Invasive Network
- The Pure Water Partners program, with the Eugene Water and Electric Board
- And a host of other fiscally sponsored projects and efforts

These programs all have numerous Federal, State, organizational and public involvement.

I am calling today to voice my support and encouragement for continued funding for the Federal Forest Restoration Program. My colleague Dylan Kruse previously spoke to you this morning about the overall view of FFRP- I'd like to give you a more personal and granular perspective. My main focus here is the fledgling Siuslaw Forest-wide Collaborative, working in conjunction with Sustainable Northwest. Funding for the formation of this collaborative affects the eight different counties that the Siuslaw National Forest is located in; all of these counties will feel the economic impacts of this funding reduction.

Continued support of the FFRP allows forest projects to keep moving forward in a timely manner, since ALL of the partners and stakeholders are on board, based on their participation in the forest-wide collaborative. Projects will not become involved in the legal process- this means that work can take place in these eight Oregon counties, important restoration work that creates jobs, leverages Federal dollars, restores the land and creates timber. This is truly a win-win scenario.

In the scheme of the reductions you are trying to achieve, this is a small amount- but it means everything to the potential stakeholders of the Siuslaw Collaborative.

Collaboratives like this can help Oregonians with divergent viewpoints arrive at practical, common-ground solutions, keep them out of the courts, and keep the on-the-ground work in and around the National Forest moving full-speed ahead.

Thank you for your time and consideration, in support of this important program. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

Subject: Proposed Department of Forestry position cut
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:13:34 AM

Dear Committee Members —

The proposed \$118K cut to the Partnership and Planning position at the Oregon Department of Forestry would eliminate work on some of the most vital wildfire reduction and climate planning work for the next months in this department.

ODF has a responsibility to respond in a more proactive manner to EO 20-04. Thus far they have provided no meaningful plan for how they will contribute to reducing GHG emissions and increased carbon sequestration per the goals laid out in the Executive Order. Cutting funding at this time will further delay adequate planning.

We must not contribute to further crises in our response to the budgetary gaps caused by the Covid crisis. The Climate Crisis will not disappear due to financial difficulties. It's important that we realize climate planning brings economic benefits to our state because we are uniquely advantaged by our natural lands and forests. Climate progress will bring jobs in Oregon and help our recovery.

Thank you for your time and efforts on our behalf.

Brett Baylor
OLCV Metro Climate Action Team
808 SE Lambert St.
Portland 97202

Subject: Item 268
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:20:02 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Oregon Department of Forestry's proposed budget cuts. My name is Fritz Ellett and I grow Christmas Trees in Wasc County. I strongly oppose the plan to increase the private landowner share of base protection costs to 55%. First, this concept drastically changes our established wildfire funding model, which was carefully set in place by Oregon law. Second, it discounts the contributions that private landowners already take to manage their properties in a way that reduces fuel loads and risk of wildfire. Last, it places a serious cost burden on the back's of landowners who are already struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Please do not approve Item #268 of the Rebalance Plan."

Subject: Rebalance plan
Date: Thursday, July 23, 2020 9:51:58 AM

Co-chairs Taylor and Reardon,

Thanks for accepting comments on the
Or Dept of Forestry's proposed budget cuts. My name is Robert Klinger and I grow
sheep pasture and timber in Yamhill Co.

I am verry opposed to any increase
to the landowners share of base protection cost to 55%.

1. It changes the established funding model SET IN LAW.
2. It says that my mgmt, including over \$30/mo electric bill for keeping irrigation system available for fire protection, when not needed for irrigating pasture. And the livestock grazing, managed to keep dry grass down & green grass forming fire breaks set to prevent / controll fire spread.

PLEASE DO NOT approve Item #268 of the Rebalance Plan.

THANK YOU

Robert G Klinger

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.



Co-Chairs Representative Reardon and Senator Taylor, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of SEIU Local 503. We are a union that represents more than 72,000 workers across the state of Oregon, with many who touch the natural resources budget in some way - from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department employees, to Forestry workers, to workers engaged in fish conversation, and more.

We appreciate that the Legislature is engaging in this public process, and allowing us the opportunity to see, line by line, the cuts that are being proposed to rebalance the state's budget. Our goal is to give you some perspective on the proposed cuts, and the impacts we believe they will have on services provided by our members.

Department of Forestry

We are aware there have been recent fiscal challenges at the Department of Forestry, and appreciate the Legislature's support for the Agency. We believe the work the Agency and our members do is critical for our state, and are grateful the Legislature has recognized that.

We believe that this year will be no exception to the recent historical level of wildfire we have seen, and we feel it's necessary to ground our comments in some important realities with regard to that. A report from May 27, 2020 by Doug Grafe, the Chief of Fire Protection, outlines the projections for the 2020 fire season. According to that report, most of the state is experiencing moderate drought conditions, with significant portions in extreme drought. Temperature estimates for this summer are that we are likely to experience higher temperatures than normal, and experience less rainfall than normal. The summer wildland fire potential, according to the report, is significant and impacts most of the state. The number of average acres burned in the last decade is significantly higher than the last, and growing. All of this to say: cuts to ODF, especially cuts to Fire Protection staff and equipment resources, put the state at serious risk in another bad fire season. It is from this place that we provide this feedback.

Federal Forest Health: Line 250 says, "Reduce Operations by 8.5%; Vacancy and Contract Savings," which at first reading seems like a harmless sweep of unneeded funds. However, if you return to the Department's May allotment cuts, you can see the detail that adds up to this reduction includes this line item, "Reduces funding to retain seasonal workforce (firefighters) to complete timber sale layout and implement restoration projects. GF has been critical to seed GNA project development and to pay for layout costs on the front end before timber receipts come due." This only saves \$34,000 General Fund and impacts the Agency's ability to engage in seasonal firefighting. Given the small dollar savings and potential impacts, we believe the Legislature should

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reject at least that portion of this reduction to preserve the Agency's ability to bring on seasonal firefighters.

Fire Protection:

There are a number of cuts in this program that we find concerning given the above fire season context. Line 253 reduces equipment purchases, however, if you read the original allotment narrative, it specifically notes, "Reduced investments in the motorpool will affect the level of protection as engines wearout and inadequate funds exist for replacement." There could be unknown impacts to fire protection efforts if the motorpool cannot be repaired or replaced. Line 255 captures vacancy savings, but the original narrative says more specifically, "This includes vacancy savings, hiring deferral, overtime, etc. Hiring deferrals will impact on employees to be trained and ready for fire season. Overtime reductions will mean districts may overexpend budgets." As noted here, it's a direct impact to the ability of the Agency to be prepared for this year's fire season. Significantly, there are also cuts on the original allotment list that the Agency noted would have less impacts on protection that are *not* included here, such as:

- "Federal Grant indirect cost offsets to minimize impacts of GF reduction. (State Fire Assistance)" - \$125,000 General Fund.
- "Federal Grant direct cost offsets to minimize impacts of GF reduction. (State Fire Assistance)" - \$50,000 General Fund.
- "Detection Cameras - This reduction will impact the fire detection ability across two districts" - \$39,260 General Fund.

We think some of these cuts, and potentially others on the original list, would be preferable and less impactful to Agency operations than those listed above.

In summary, we believe there are a handful of proposed cuts that would be problematic given the impacts on programs, workers, and the people who are served. SEIU looks forward to working with legislators to identify other opportunities for savings in order to preserve critical programs and staff.

Sincerely,

Courtney Graham
Political Strategist
SEIU Local 503, OPEU

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