



= *Life in Balance*

RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resource
Chair, Senator Michael Dembrow
900 Court Street NE, Room S-407
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for Senate Bill 772

Chairs Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

Lomakatsi Restoration Project offers our strong support of SB 772, Task Force on Forest Health Enhancement, which establishes forward thinking responses to the crisis of wildfire and smoke facing our state. Lomakatsi is honored to share our innovative, nationally-recognized ecological forestry workforce and employment models for adults and youth. We believe this may be a piece of the answer we need to create more fire resilient communities, landscapes and local jobs.

Lomakatsi Restoration Project is a non-profit, grassroots organization that for the past 24 years has worked within low-income, forest-based communities throughout Oregon and Northern California to create social equity and sustainable economic opportunities by restoring dry forest ecosystems and creating fire adapted communities.

Senate Bill 772 is relevant for the tasks being undertaken in addressing our forest and community health and social welfare. This step will naturally build into the vision of the development of the Oregon Forest Corps which would implement an institutional training ground to provide a launching pad for youth training and gaining employment in natural resource careers.

As part of our work we sustain 55 full time adult employees in house and provide hundreds of seasonal jobs, supporting 15 different contractors working across thousands of acres of federal and private land forests. Layered within these large-scale forest restoration initiatives, we have created hundreds of youth jobs in forestry and ecosystem management. As forest restoration and fuel reduction by-products, these projects provide saw logs, biomass, and small diameter material to local mills.

We collaborate with the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, numerous Native American Tribes, and a host of NGO's. Our participation in The Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project is just one example of how we are creating healthier forests and safer communities in Southern Oregon.

One of the many positive aspects of Senate Bill 772 is the opportunity to engage private industry as well as state collaborators in seeking the best solutions for wildfire and fire adapted communities. This bill brings innovation and sets the table for green jobs in restoring our ecosystems and creating living wage opportunities for Oregon's rural communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to rise in support of SB 772. We strongly urge its passage.

Respectfully,

Marko Bey
Executive Director

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