



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Forestry

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February 11, 2020

Honorable Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
HR-C, State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

### **Re: Senate Bill 1512—Relating to the management of state lands**

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 1512.

ODF manages 729,000 acres of Oregon's state forests for the greatest permanent value to the state by providing a range of environmental, economic, and social benefits. State forests provide important habitat for native wildlife and fish and recreational opportunities for all Oregonians. These forests also provide a sustainable flow of timber, which generates revenues for counties and local taxing districts and provides family wage jobs. All of these benefits are funded through the sale of timber, without any money from the General Fund. The expectations and demands placed on these lands to provide a range of public benefits are increasing.

The Department of Forestry needs to additional authorities to meet the modern demands of public forest management. New tools such as transfers of ownership or legal mandate, or selling conservation easements or small isolated parcels would increase the overall benefits Oregonians receive from their state forests. We have appreciated the opportunity to work with a variety of engaged stakeholders on this concept, and we intend to continue to work with all interested stakeholders—including the counties—on this and other ideas to improve the tools available for management of Oregon's state forestlands.

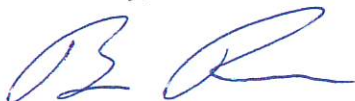
Currently, the Department of Forestry does not have the authority to sell conservation easements, sell parcels, or transfer state lands that were acquired prior to 2009. The department only has the authority to exchange lands, though these types of land transactions are infrequent in recent years, as other landowners are less willing to commit to the arduous process. Senate Bill 1512 would provide a new opportunity for managing Oregon's state forests by authorizing the transfer of lands that have restricted potential to achieve the greatest permanent value mandate, and parcels that have limited revenue-generating ability or that provide high-value benefits out of the framework of greatest permanent value.

The Department of Forestry has the capabilities and skilled staff to manage forests outside of the greatest permanent value mandate. A single management objective of recreation or conservation established during the transfer process could be successfully implemented by department staff. Transfers could be used to acquire Common School Lands that are currently owned by the Department of State Lands with the intent of consolidating both ownerships to more effectively manage Oregon's state forestlands. Another possibility for transfers are isolated coastal zone properties that have high scenic, recreational, or conservation value. These examples represent a small portion of the overall Board of Forestry ownership, where the transfer tool could be used to fine-tune the land base.

Under direction from the Board of Forestry, the department is currently working to develop a Forest Management Plan and a Habitat Conservation Plan which would provide long-term certainty for the conservation of native species, and at the same time, provide assurances to manage these lands for timber production. Both plans permit land exchanges, transfers, acquisitions, and sales that are located in the plan area and such actions will align with the goals, objectives, and conservation measures established in the current drafts of those management plans.

The Department of Forestry, with the leadership of the Board of Forestry, manages Oregon's state forests for a range of benefits for the people of Oregon. We're available to answer any questions the committee may have and to provide assistance to the committee in developing solutions, if needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'BP', is positioned above the typed name of the sender.

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cc:

Jason Miner, Natural Resources Policy Director  
Amira Streeter, Natural Resource Policy Advisor  
Tom Imeson, Chair of Board of Forestry