



To: House Committee on Rules
Chair Holvey
Vice Chair Drazan
Vice Chair Smith Warner
Representative Fahey
Representative Nosse
Representative Sprenger
Representative Zika

From: Bob Van Dyk, Wild Salmon Center

Date: February 20, 2020

RE: Support for House Bill 4168, the Forest Accord

Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Bob Van Dyk, and I lead the Oregon policy efforts for the Wild Salmon Center. I want to start by acknowledging that Mr. Sean Stevens from Oregon Wild is also here today to help with explanations and answer questions if needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 4168, which I will call the “Forest Accord” in shorthand. I ask you to support this bill.

My organization, Wild Salmon Center, works with partners to support the conservation and sustainable use of salmon fisheries across the North Pacific. Because salmon depend on healthy forests for crucial parts of their life history, we closely follow the state and federal forest laws. Over more than twenty years, we have worked through administrative, legislative, and legal processes to advance forest laws for salmon conservation in state processes. While we focus on salmon conservation, many of our partners work on other forest conservation issues, such as protection of terrestrial species, limiting pesticide spray, and enhancing forest carbon sequestration.

Over those many years, we have been on the opposite side of major timber interests again and again. Today it is my pleasure to be on the same side of the table as the timber industry, asking for your support for legislation.

As Greg mentioned, thirteen fish conservation and environmental organizations joined with thirteen major forest industry companies to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the overarching purpose of setting us on a new path.

First, each side agreed to work together to pursue short-term legislation addressing longstanding and well-known disputes. That legislation is now HB 4168. The primary topics are aerial pesticide spray on forestlands and stream buffers in the Rogue-Siskiyou region.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Second, each side agreed to commit to a mediated process for a science-based review of Oregon forest laws, with a focus on advancing a Habitat Conservation Plan for imperiled salmon and riparian-dependent species. We set a firm timeline of finishing our work before the 2022 session, so that if there is sufficient agreement, then laws reflecting agreed upon changes can be enacted. The legislation directs the Governor to organize the mediation.

Third, each side agreed to withdraw support for the several ballot measures each were pursuing, and the conservation signatories also agreed to support a delay of work on the current coho rule process, as well as withholding support for certain administrative petitions while the mediated process is underway.

Our environmental and fish conservation organizations agreed to this new path for several reasons, but fundamentally it was because the path we were on promised high expense, intense divisiveness, and uncertain result. It is a path we know well, and to be clear, we might end up on that path still if we cannot pass this bill. But as Emerson wrote, "All life is an experiment." We concluded it was time for a new experiment.

Greg and I will now each walk through some of the main provisions of the bill. But in closing let me say I appreciate the opportunity to address you, and I encourage you to lend your active support to HB 4168.