

BEFORE THE OREGON HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE
Statement of Mary Scurlock in Support of HB 4168
February 20, 2020

I am an independent freshwater policy consultant and coordinator of the Oregon Stream Protection Coalition, whose single goal is stronger baseline protection for streams and other water bodies on the almost 11 million acres of forestland governed by the Oregon Forest Practices Act. My involvement in aquatic conservation on the forested watersheds of the Pacific Northwest stretches back almost thirty years, and includes petitions for salmon listings and litigation against the Oregon Board of Forestry under the Endangered Species Act. Countless hours have been spent marshaling science and policy arguments in favor of increased protection for water and against positions taken by timber industry representatives.

Today, as a negotiator of and signatory to the recent Memorandum of Understanding between thirteen environmental and fishing representatives and thirteen forest landowner representatives, I urge Committee members to support passage of HB 4168.

I offer here a few key reasons to support this legislation:

- *A critical mass of environmental and timber interests is united in support.* It is rare for legislation to be so strongly supported by both conservation and timber interests, and this bill represents sincere and hard-fought compromise on both sides. I urge you to seize this moment to bring Oregonians together by charting a path to future policy change that avoids, at least for now, divisive, costly, and uncertain ballot box battles.
- *This bill charts a new path to meaningful policy change.* The goal of the mediated policy development process kicked off by HB 4168 is a set of changes to the Oregon Forest Practices Act and implementing rules that are adequate for the state to gain federal regulatory assurances covering salmonids and other aquatic and riparian-dependent species. The establishment of this common goal along with the demonstrated commitment of the parties and Governor Brown is cause for optimism that the process will lead to further broadly-supported legislation in 2022.
- *This bill is an immediate response to profound public concern about aerial application of herbicides near homes, schools and waters.* Homes, schools, water sources and streams will receive increased protection from aerial spray as a result of this bill. New, more specific notice requirements for nearby residents and increased access to records improve transparency about the “what, when and where” of spray operations.
- *Logging buffers will increase in the Siskiyou region on some salmon streams.* This legislation will fast-track improvements to stream buffers on thousands of miles of stream that were previously subject to debate at the administrative level.

Respectfully submitted,



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