



**OREGON FOREST &  
INDUSTRIES COUNCIL**  
SUSTAINABILITY. SCIENCE. INNOVATION. GROWTH.



Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson & members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity today to provide testimony **supporting House Bill 3150**. For the record, my name is Mike Eliason, I am General Counsel and Director of Government Affairs for the Oregon Forest and Industries Council. I am also speaking today on behalf of the Oregon Small Woodland Association, and together we represent the private forest sector in Oregon, including small and large forest landowners and manufacturers.

Protecting habitat for one of our state's most iconic species is a fundamental part of forestland management. Oregon has adopted a unique blend of regulatory and voluntary measures to conserve and improve salmon populations and their habitat. Strong land use laws have helped keep forest and agricultural lands from being developed. Much of the Forest Practices Act, which is a comprehensive, science-based set of rules that govern management of private forestlands, focuses on providing habitat for salmon within healthy forests. These plus the voluntary measures in the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, developed in 1997 to restore native fish populations, make up what is known as the "Oregon Way", a unique approach that balances the protection and use of our forest resources.

These efforts over the last two decades have significantly helped preserve and recover coho salmon in Oregon. Between 1997 when the Oregon Plan was developed, and 2011, private forest landowners contributed nearly \$100 million toward restoration activities that benefit fish passage and habitat. These projects include over 16,000 miles of road surveys, over 3,000 miles of road improvements, nearly 8,000 improvements to culvert or bridge sizes, over 18,000 improvements to surface drainages, and nearly 2,000 stream crossing improvements. That was just in the first 14 years of the program, after which we stopped counting because for many landowners, these practices have become second nature. Placing large wood in streams for coho habitat is so commonplace now the projects are often not even reported. This work is all completely voluntary, beyond regulation, and illustrates how important fish habitat is to Oregonians.

Lastly, we have a long history of funding research about forestry and the effects of forest management on fish and water quality. Nearly one quarter of the Forest Products Harvest Tax helps fund research at Oregon State University. Since 1994, that contribution has equated to more than \$3 million every year in direct funding for OSU research programs like the Fish and Wildlife Habitat in Managed Forest Research Program. Through that program alone, which is in its 26th year, roughly 80-100 studies have been at least partially funded by the timber industry, with absolutely no direction on the outcome of that research.

Protecting habitat and the preservation and recovery of coho is extremely important to us. In 2019 the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recognized the positive impact these measures are having and opted not to list the coho on the Oregon Endangered Species list. That's a success story we're proud of, and we proudly support HB 3150 as a way to continue a collective effort for salmon improvement now and into the future.

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