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Testimony in Support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 16 in honor of Marty Myers

Submitted by: Catherine Macdonald on behalf of The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy in Oregon is a non-partisan, science-based organization that works in communities across the state, manages lands and waters in varied ecosystems, and partners with ranchers, farmers, fishers, timber and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature. It is our pleasure to write in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 16 introduced by Senators Hansell and Dembrow and Representatives Levy and Smith in honor of the significant contribution Marty Myers made to conservation in Oregon through his efforts to protect and steward the Boardman Grasslands Conservation Area on Threemile Canyon Farms and the many other actions he took to make a positive contribution to society.

The Boardman Conservation Area is Critical Habitat for the Washington Ground Squirrel and several other species of conservation concern, including the – Ferruginous hawks, Loggerhead shrike, and Sage sparrow, Western burrowing owl, grasshopper sparrow, long-billed curlew, and Northern sagebrush lizard. It is also home to grasslands and shrub steppe ecosystems of conservation significance. Marty Meyer played a major role, if not the major role in protecting the Conservation Area.

In 1999, Marty stepped into a long-fought water rights dispute between farming and conservation interests. Taking a different tact, Marty found a path forward to address the key conservation interests while also ensuring a positive future for his agricultural operation. Parties on both sides of the water rights settlement invited The Nature Conservancy in to be the long-term manager of the Conservation Area as part of their settlement agreement. In addition to signing a long-term management agreement with The Nature Conservancy, Threemile Canyon Farms agreed to fund the majority of management costs for the Conservation Area and entered into a first of its kind Multi-species Candidate Conservation Agreement (MSCCAA), which was at the time, a new tool in the US Fish and Wildlife's Endangered Species Act tool box. Over the past 20 plus years, we have had the pleasure of working with Marty as his partner in protecting and managing the Boardman Grasslands Conservation Area.

Knowing his many strengths, The Nature Conservancy called on Marty's to be a problem solver for other challenging issues we hoped to tackle. In January 2016, we convened the Oregon Business Leaders' Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Task Force to design a five-year strategy for significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon while maintaining the viability and competitive health of Oregon's businesses. The task force came together with the recognition that (1) climate change presents a significant threat to our livelihoods and well-being; (2) accelerating actions to reduce emissions today is critical; (3) decoupling our economy from carbon will make us more competitive in the future; and (4) the Oregon business community can and should play an important role in determining how to best transition to a lower-carbon economy. The resulting strategy helped frame The Nature Conservancy's engagement in climate mitigation work in Oregon.

In all of our interactions, Marty was an open-minded and forward-thinking problem solver and as described in the Concurrent Resolution – innovative, visionary, brilliant, genuine and caring. He is greatly missed.