

March 30, 2021

Senate Committee on Energy and the Environment

Testimony in opposition to SB 541: Relating to Carbon Sequestration

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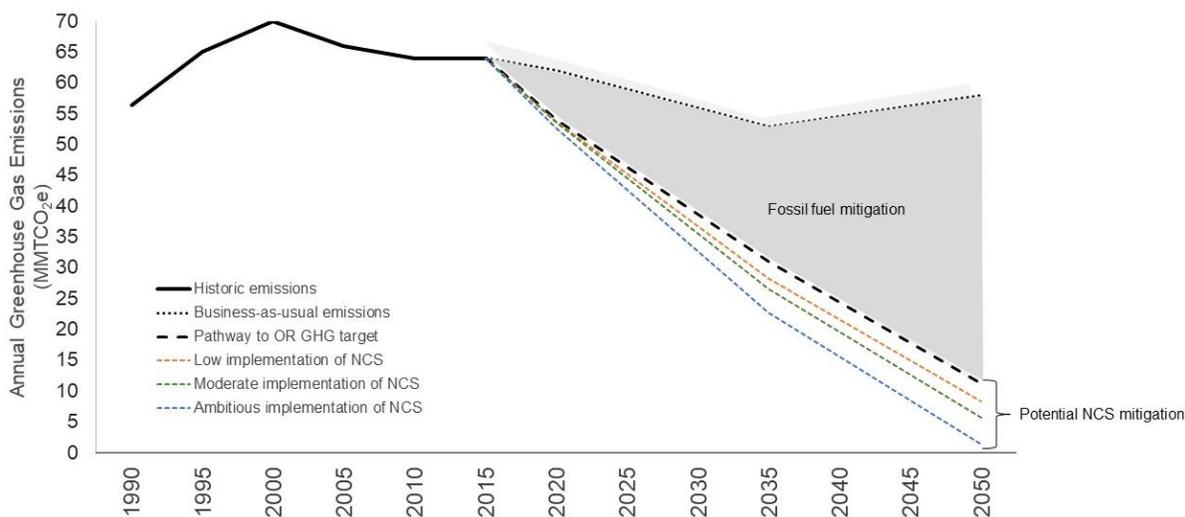
Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 541, relating to carbon sequestration. While we appreciate the committee's recognition of the role of natural climate solutions, we oppose the approach taken by SB 541.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a science-based, non-partisan organization committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Oregon, TNC has over 80,000 supporters and members in every county. Based in communities around the state, we manage lands and waters in varied ecosystems and partner with ranchers, farmers, fishers, timber and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature.

Addressing climate change by reducing emissions, increasing carbon sequestration and improving ecosystem and community resilience are top priorities for our organization in Oregon and around the world. We strongly believe that Oregonians have a responsibility to enact policies to address our contributions and enable the necessary responses to climate change.

The management of natural and working lands is a critical component of our overall response to climate mitigation and adaptation. However, carbon sequestration benefits from natural climate solutions should be considered **in addition to and beyond** the fossil fuel emission reductions necessary to meet the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets. As can be seen in the following graph, natural climate solutions play an important role in climate action when complementary to, but not instead of, fossil fuel emissions mitigation.



Adapted from Graves et al. 2020¹, demonstrating the potential of natural climate solutions to provide additional GHG emissions reductions benefits compared to business-as-usual management of natural and working lands.

¹ Graves, R. A., R. D. Haugo, A. Holz, M. Nielsen-Pincus, A. Jones, B. Kellogg, C. Macdonald, K. Popper, and M. Schindel. 2020. Potential greenhouse gas reductions from Natural Climate Solutions in Oregon, USA. Plos One 15:e0230424.

Investments in our natural environment can help mitigate climate impacts while supporting community health and prosperity. Our research shows that the restoration and protection of our natural and working lands—forests, rivers, estuaries, grasslands, and farmland—have tremendous potential to reduce GHG emissions when combined with a transition to clean, renewable energy.

Natural climate solutions should be incentivized and promoted via programs that are complimentary to fossil fuel emissions reductions, but they are not a substitute for other necessary actions. The approach in SB 541 would undermine the state's necessary focus on efforts to reduce GHG emissions, and we therefore oppose the legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.