

To: Chair Jeff Golden, Vice Chair Kennemer and Committee Members

From: Debra Higbee-Sudyka, Corvallis Oregon

RE: SB 1546-1 Elliott State Research Forest

I appreciate the effort that went into getting SB 1546 to this point, and support it with the addition of important changes.

The concept of “a world class research forest” that SB 1546 is laying the groundwork for, is laudable. However, we need a research forest for the 21st Century. The issues we are faced with—the 6th mass extinction, the changing climate, and an uncertain future—require this. It’s just as important to decouple our school children from the disaster awaiting them with global warming, as it is to decouple them from the common school fund.

Therefore, OSU’s Elliott Forest Research Plan should put the Elliott Forests at the forefront in the fight against climate change, including all Oregon forests and natural and working lands, as the Oregon Global Warming Commission’s research point out.¹ This should be the focus of the Elliott Research Forest Proposal.

As you know, SB 1546 rests on the foundational document of the OSU Elliot Research Forest proposal, and due to the limits to judicial review, public input into the OSU ERF proposal will be difficult. It’s important that citizens are allowed to ask for accountability, beyond whether OSU violates the proposal.

In addition, oversight in the selection of board candidates is narrow. As SB 1546 is written, The Department of State Lands will consider input from, the university and the existing board of directors when determining whom to appoint to the board of directors. This will restrict who can serve on the board. A research forest that puts the Elliott Forest in the forefront in the fight against climate change must have a truly independent oversight structure, free of any financial conflicts of interest.

It's time to resolve the long-standing Elliott issue, but when you're dealing with public forests, SB 1546 needs to focus on the greater public good. Research in the Elliott, and forests in Oregon could make significant contributions toward global goals in reducing greenhouse gas concentrations in the earth's atmosphere.

Thank you for the opportunity to give input into your decision.

Respectfully,



Debra Higbee-Sudyka
Corvallis, Oregon

¹ See the Oregon Global Warming Commission’s [Natural and Working Land Proposal](#) and Oregon [Global Warming Commission Forest Carbon Accounting Project](#)