



Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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January 25, 2023

The Honorable Pam Marsh, Chair
House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: HB 2986

Chair Marsh, Co-Vice Chairs B. Levy and E. Levy and Committee Members:

Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL) is Oregon's state forest operator trade association which represents nearly 1000 forest contracting businesses. Our members have been involved in the management of Oregon's forests for generations and conduct many of the prescribed burning operations across the state.

AOL is a member of the Oregon Proscribed Fire Council, sat on the Certified Burn Manager Program RAC and engages with the Oregon Department of Forestry and the US Forest Service to advance opportunities to expand the use of fire in the forested landscape.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the voice of nearly 22,000 hard working Oregonians.

AOL is supportive of efforts to increase the pace and scale of prescribed burning in Oregon and our members are willing and able to make significant strides in this direction. It is, however, a challenge for our members to address workforce and capacity shortages. Forest contracting work is physically demanding and it has been difficult to fill positions over the last 5-10 years as young people choose to pursue careers in other fields. Nevertheless, those that do choose a career in forest contracting find they have purpose in the work they complete and develop a deep passion for their craft and the industry at large.

To that end, AOL recently created a Workforce Development Program for our members and hired a manager to facilitate such efforts.

HB 2986 could be a great opportunity to continue gains in workforce development for the forest contracting sector so, forest contractors and small businesses should also be eligible for the grants available from the Prescribed Fire Capacity Fund.

We are working on amendment language with bill sponsors to ensure private businesses are eligible entities in the Prescribed Fire Capacity Grant Program.

If you would like to coordinate with us to ensure this program is as helpful as possible, please feel free to reach out to myself or our contract lobbyist Kevin Campbell with the Victory Group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on our views of HB 2986.

Graciously,

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