



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

February 12, 2023

Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Senator Jeff Golden, Chair
Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair

RE: Testimony from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) in Support of SB 530 - Natural Climate Solutions

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support for the Natural Climate Solutions bill (SB 530). SB 530 is built from the work of the State's Oregon Global Warming Commission's (OGWC) Natural and Working Lands proposal.

OAPA is a nonprofit professional membership organization of over 800 planners and those who work with planning in formulating and implementing development and conservation policies at the state and local level. OAPA works to create sustainable and vibrant Oregon communities through professional development, advocacy for sound planning, providing resources to meet the challenges of growth and change, and embracing and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity.

Our support of SB 530 stems from the OAPA priority policy of "Oregon Needs To Act Now To Confront Climate Change". We know the climate change impacts every Oregonian. Oregon is experiencing rising temperatures and extreme heat; drought; extreme precipitation and flooding; wildfires; rising sea levels; vegetation changes; ocean acidification; and slope stability. All over the state these events are impacting homes and businesses; economies; public infrastructure; and public health.

Effective land use practices are key to confronting climate change. While the State has taken actions to reduce GHG emissions, mitigation alone will not get Oregon to zero net emissions. There is a critical need to take additional actions that lead to increased carbon sequestration on Oregon's natural and working lands as well. SB 530 promotes these actions, as we note below.

SB 530 provides for voluntary and incentivized programs including:

- Adding climate sequestration and storage, along with climate mitigation and resiliency, to our active measure;
- Promoting Oregon's working lands economy;
- Reducing urban heat islands by increasing urban tree canopy;

- Protecting drinking water and addressing drought by investing in streamside and wetland restoration;
- Increasing protection for coastal communities from the impacts of storm surge; and
- Securing federal funds to invest in natural climate solutions on natural and working lands.

OAPA makes one additional suggestion, which we believe to be significant. We advocate that State and local planning work and projects incorporate community benefits that bring measurable, permanent improvements to the lives of affected residents - particularly those in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Those benefits act to minimize or mitigate disproportionate negative impacts on communities of color, lower-income residents, and other underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. We note and support that the bill prioritizes "Ensuring equitable benefits of climate mitigation for environmental justice communities, landowners and land managers".

However, section 10 of the bill provides that the OGWC **may** establish a natural and working lands advisory committee. The bill describes that membership would include: tribal governments; local governments; forest products interests or organizations; agricultural interests or organizations; environmental justice interests; conservation interests; and technical service providers. We suggest that establishing the advisory committee be a "**shall**" rather than a "**may**".

Again we thank you for the opportunity to express OAPA's support of SB 503 - Natural Climate Solutions.

Sincerely,

Kevin C. Cook

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