

February 13, 2023

FROM: Jonathan Harker, AICP

TO: Senate Committee On Natural Resources  
Senator Jeff Golden, Chair  
Senator Fred Girod, Vice-Chair

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 530 - Natural Climate Solutions

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

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 503- Natural Climate Solutions.

I am testifying today as a retired city land use planner with 30 years of experience in Oregon city planning. At retirement I was the City of Gresham's Planning Director. I am also testifying as the grandparent of a 16-month old grandson and 4-month granddaughter.

SB 530 articulates why policies are needed to increase carbon sequestration and storage on Oregon's working and natural lands. It also describes the many benefits to Oregonians that would occur when natural climate solutions are applied to that end. And the need and benefits of natural climate solutions are well described in other written testimony you have received.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Oregon's Planning and Land Use Program. The program was legislated after an extensive and state-wide conversation of what Oregonians valued when it came to Oregon's lands.

And what Oregonians said was they valued it's working and natural lands: agricultural lands; forest lands; riparian and estuary lands; fish and wildlife habitat lands; wetlands; wilderness and recreational lands; and coastal shorelands. An emphasis of the planning and land use program created was to protect and preserve those lands (in part by curtailing urban sprawl) so future generations of Oregonians could enjoy the benefits of those lands Oregonians in 1973 enjoyed and valued.

The impacts of climate change (rising temperatures and extreme heat; drought; extreme precipitation and flooding; wildfires; rising sea levels; vegetation changes; ocean acidification; and slope stability) pose a threat to Oregon's working and natural lands that Oregon's Planning and Land Use program has worked so hard to protect and preserve.

SB 530, by establishing a policy to increase carbon sequestration and storage on thees lands not only to lessen the cause of global warming but also increase the value Oregonians will place on these lands and thus the need to increase efforts to protect and preserve them.

The natural climate solutions when implemented will increase the viability and resiliency of the lands to climate change impacts as well as increase the economy and benefits that come result from how these lands are used.

Enacting SB 530 is an important action if Oregonians 50 years hence are to enjoy and benefits from these land we so value today.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 503. I sincerely hope that the legislature will take this action so that my grandchildren can enjoy the benefits our working and natural lands bring.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Harker, AICP