



February 15, 2023

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Testimony in Support of SB 530

Chair Dembrow, Senator Golden, Rep. Marsh, Rep. Neron, and other members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 530 on behalf of the more than 74,000 members and supporters of the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club.

SB 530 positions Oregon very well to benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act's (IRA) \$30 billion in incentives for climate-smart agriculture, conservation, sustainable forestry, etc. Available federal and private investments are critical sources of state funding for voluntary actions to remove climate pollution from the atmosphere and store it in natural and working lands.

The obligations and opportunities outlined in Natural Climate Solutions SB 530 are as stunning, comprehensive and diverse as Oregon's coastal waters, high deserts, and mountain ranges. Astutely, SB 530 seeks to leverage Nature's natural process of carbon sequestration in the state's wetlands, estuaries, natural forests, parks, open range and working agricultural lands, with the goal of maximizing climate resilience on the way to reaching net zero emissions no later than 2050. SB 530 is common sense legislation that enlists a number of entities, departments and resources in this all-in effort to responsibly address the climate crisis. The Oregon Sierra Club strongly urges you to vote Yes on SB 530. We are optimistic that you will be excited to forge ahead with this groundbreaking opportunity that can model climate-truthing for other states and entities.

As State Senators and Representatives of the Oregon Legislature, you have taken an oath to accept functional responsibility for the welfare of Oregon, its citizens, its nine federally recognized Indian tribes, and the environment of plant and animal life vitalizing our lands. SB 530 entrusts you with the sobering charge of implementing, safeguarding and advancing Oregon's Climate Resilience policies. Like an in-sync basketball team in a title playoff game, it charges you, state officials and citizens to dexterously muster the "capability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from significant climate-related threats with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy and the environment." Indeed, this is an all-hands-on-deck strategic undertaking.

SB 530 is strikingly comprehensive in its scope of actions and means to activate Climate Resilience in Oregon and increase human well-being and biodiversity. It's a far-sighted vision of how Oregon must move forward to do our part to constrain the effects of Climate Change. In so doing, it acknowledges the terrifying imagining of not doing all we possibly can to minimize and mitigate the effects and losses induced by a Climate Change future.

Prudently, SB 530 provides that the Natural and Working Lands Fund is established in the State Treasury, separate and distinct from the General Fund. Allocation of monies is provided for and made accountable. For example, incentives, metrics and financial assistance are established, and tracked, to help with technical assistance for landowners, land managers and environmental justice communities to adopt practices that support natural climate solutions.

Moreover, SB 530 outlines the preferred natural solution strategies to accelerate Climate Resilience goals in Oregon: "activities that enhance or protect the ability of natural and working lands to sequester and store carbon, or reduce greenhouse gas emissions from natural and working lands, while maintaining or increasing climate resilience, human well-being and biodiversity." Simply put, fast-track farmers, ranchers, forest owners, communities and others to complement Nature doing its thing, with a lot of help from her Oregon friends. And Oregon is blessed with abundant natural potential to take advantage of this dynamic.

Science has established that carbon-rich soils, abundant with nutrients, hold more water while producing healthier and bigger yields. Tree-lined streets keep cities cooler and improve air quality. Wetlands improve water quality and habitat. Healthy forests engender clean drinking water and habitat for fish and fire defense. A net carbon sequestration and storage baseline for natural and working lands will be established; activity-based metrics and community impact metrics will evaluate and hold participants to progress-goals toward increasing net carbon sequestration and storage.

Administrative expenses are limited to 10% of budgets. Interagency cooperation—not competition—and use of established program administration are uplifted efficiencies. Strict requirements for rigorous monitoring of performance metric achievements and flows of money are intended to forestall slow-walking or fraud. It is essential to prevent subversion of this window of opportunity to gain traction against climate-induced devastation. The bill reflects an understanding that rewarding misbegotten efforts and awarding monetary incentives without oversight using systematic performance metrics would be irresponsible. But it's hoped that Oregonians of every persuasion will readily embrace the intent of this bill. Ongoing, strategic public education in many purviews will be critical for public awareness and buy-in.

In conclusion, this moment in time is an unprecedented, historic opportunity to advance Oregon's carbon sequestration and resilience goals, and to increase human well-being and biodiversity, enabling a broad range of communities, particularly the neediest, to benefit from these funds. If need be, the Oregon Legislature must do cartwheels and handstands—just

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kidding!—to take full advantage of these remarkable incentives to realize our climate goal to super-charge our climate-truthing resilience work. We ask every Natural Resources Committee member to vote YES on SB 530 to steward this remarkable legislation forward, signaling Oregon’s forward-thinking, momentum-building, optimistic faith in its citizenry and leaders.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Dix

Chair, Legislative Committee

Oregon Chapter Sierra Club