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February 27, 2023

The Honorable Jeff Golden, Chair & Honorable Members
Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol, Salem, OR

Re: Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 795

Dear Chair Golden and members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support for SB 795. Decades ago, an agreement was made by the state of Oregon to actively manage forestlands for the greatest permanent value for the local governments that deeded the forestlands to the state. But, the state is not fulfilling its part of the bargain; the commitment it made to the counties that deeded the land. Rather, the state has left forests unmanaged, vulnerable to catastrophic fire and disease, allowed anti-timber harvest extremists to influence policy and ignored the economic and societal impact to rural Oregon communities and its citizens.

Now, the Oregon Board of Forestry is proceeding with implementation of the Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which essentially cuts 35% of the timber harvest on state forests. This plan will result in the loss of jobs in rural communities like Douglas County, and not just timber and wood products industry jobs. The resulting loss of millions of dollars in revenue will impact the industry, the citizens they employ and Forest Trust Land counties. The execution of the HCP will adversely impact the ability of local governments and special districts to provide essential services such as emergency response, public safety—police and fire, community colleges, K-12 school districts, libraries and more, due to the devastating reductions in budgets resulting from the lost revenue.

As you must know, a jury determined that counties are missing out on over \$1B in revenue due to state mismanagement of forestlands and awarded damages in 2021. Unfortunately, the Oregon Court of Appeals threw out the verdict and the Oregon Supreme Court refused to hear the case. The Oregon Legislature has an opportunity to correct this injustice. We respectfully request your committee move SB 795 forward and return county forestlands back to the counties and give counties the ability to manage the forestlands sustainably as a reliable source of revenue for those of us who live, work and play in rural Oregon.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to comment, for your consideration and for your service to Oregon.

Best regards

ROSEBURG AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Debra L. Fromdahl
President & CEO



To advocate for and be the voice of the business community in the greater Roseburg area.

To strengthen, enhance and protect our members through political advocacy, economical development, community promotion and member programs and services.