



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Forestry
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November 19, 2025

Sen. Courtney Neron Misslin
Rep. Emerson Levy
Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Response to questions from the November 18 reductions hearing

Dear Co-Chairs,

Yesterday the Oregon Department of Forestry received two questions regarding our proposed reductions that we were unable to answer in person. Our responses to those questions are below.

Representative Levy: What is the least amount of cuts to the PFA that could be taken that would still demonstrate Oregon's commitment to the process?

ODF's priority is completing the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for private forestlands, which is required for our application for the Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) required under Senate Bill 1501 (2022). ODF is confident we have the resources to submit the ITP application by December 31, 2025, as planned.

The department believes it still has the resources needed for plan and application approval, even with a reduction of funds for the Adaptive Management Program and Small Forestland Investment in Stream Habitat (SFISH) Program in the current biennium.

The Adaptive Management Program began the biennium with \$3 million set aside for research projects, which will allow that work to continue through most of the biennium. The reduction of \$75,000 from the SFISH Program still leaves approximately \$1.9 million for new projects this biennium.

The Adaptive Management Program is a required component of an HCP and the SFISH Program is one of the state's conservation strategies. Once the HCP is in place, it will be critical to have dedicated funding for both programs each biennium to deliver on the state's responsibilities under the HCP.

Representative Hartman: Prevention and mitigation are cheaper than reaction. What is the potential cost of reducing the prevention and mitigation budgets?

Investing in preemptive mitigation funding can lead to less reactive spending on wildfire suppression in the future by creating resilient landscapes that can slow or stop the spread of fires and reduce fire severity. However, it is very difficult to quantify due to unpredictable fire behavior and the scale of response needed for those variable fires.

There are also many benefits of landscape resiliency and restoration work that go beyond fire suppression costs. Less fire on the landscape means fewer impacts to local communities, economies, public health, and water and air quality. Additionally, the work that goes into making landscapes more resilient enables them to withstand far more than just wildfires. Healthy landscapes are more resilient to impacts of climate change, such as drought and heat events, along with harmful insects and diseases. One [estimate from Northern Arizona University](#) found that for every dollar invested in forest restoration in high risk, high-value forested watersheds where all quantified benefits are present, over seven dollars of benefit may be returned.

Sincerely,

Derrick Wheeler
Legislative Director
Oregon Department of Forestry