

Submitter: Ellen Mendoza

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5521

I am writing in support of SB 5512, which includes Section 6, allocating \$10 million dollars for grants under the Private Forest Accord (PFA). The money will be used for grants to small forestland owners, to make improvements to streamflows on their land. The Adaptive Management Program, designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the new rules should also be fully funded at an additional \$6 million. These amounts are a tiny percentage of the total requested budget for the agency, less than 2%, yet are crucial to continue implementation of the rules adopted under the PFA. The PFA was a successful effort to come to an agreement which improves aquatic habitats within private timberlands, so that timber operations will meet Federal requirements under the Endangered Species Act. The Habitat Conservation Plan, developed out of the Private Forest Accord still needs to be approved by the Federal agencies, by 2027, or else standards will roll back to the old rules. The grants authorized in this budget will help win that approval.

The Oregon legislature has endorsed and supported the PFA with legislation, starting in 2021. Legislators recognized the value of a process which permits logging while also improving and protecting stream habitat for fish and other aquatic species. However, the PFA requires money to continue the changes it endorsed, and the \$10 million in the budget will do that. In addition, \$6 million should be added to fund the evaluation of the PFA, to ensure approval of the Habitat Management Plan by Federal agencies.

Oregon is the largest producer of timber in the country. It should also be the best at safeguarding the land and resources where that timber grows. These budget allocations will help do that.