

Submitter: Jen Hamaker
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1590

ONRI strongly support the –2 amendment to SB 1590, and I urge this Legislature to adopt it without delay.

This amendment is necessary because the Oregon Department of Forestry has exceeded its authority, violated statutory obligations, and obligated future legislatures without consent, oversight, or a lawful funding plan.

Why Legislative Action Is Required

ODF was created to generate its own revenue through active forest management, not to bankrupt itself and then demand taxpayer bailouts. For more than a century, it did exactly that—until now.

In 2024, ODF adopted a 70-year Habitat Conservation Plan that removed approximately 57% of state forest acres from harvest and reduced timber volume by at least 34%, without:

- *Including a financial sustainability plan
- *Accounting for Greatest Permanent Value
- *Properly involving Forest Trust Land Counties
- *Securing legislative approval before implementation.

That decision was reckless, unlawful, and entirely foreseeable in its consequences.

The Result: Insolvency by Design

ODF's current financial crisis did not "come out of the blue."
It is the direct result of intentional policy choices.

ODF:

- *Defunded itself by drastically reducing harvests
- *Failed to collect hundreds of millions in accounts receivable
- *Obligated future legislatures in violation of Oregon law
- *Then returned to this body asking for \$218 million in taxpayer funds to cover costs it once paid for itself.

That is not conservation.

That is mismanagement.

Why the –2 Amendment Matters

The –2 amendment restores legislative authority over public lands policy and stops state agencies from unilaterally binding Oregon to long-term land-use decisions without accountability.

It sends a clear message:

- *Agencies do not write state policy
- *Staff do not obligate future legislatures
- *Conservation does not excuse financial collapse
- *Taxpayers are not a blank check

This amendment does not privatize public lands.

It does not eliminate conservation.

It does not dismantle protections.

It simply reasserts that major public land decisions belong with the Legislature, where accountability, transparency, and fiscal responsibility exist.

Fire, Jobs, and Reality

Unmanaged forests burn.

Burned forests destroy wildlife, communities, and billions in value. When an agency knowingly restricts active management and increases fuel accumulation, the resulting wildfire losses are not “acts of nature” — they are foreseeable consequences of policy decisions, and the liability belongs with those who made them.

-Oregon has lost seven mills in one year.

-Rural jobs are disappearing.

-Fire costs have exploded to nearly five times the 10-year average.

Meanwhile, ODF has turned a \$6 billion public asset into a liability—and now asks taxpayers to subsidize the damage.

Closing

The –2 amendment is not radical.

It is corrective.

It restores balance, accountability, and the rule of law.

I urge you to support the –2 amendment to SB 1590 and make it clear that Oregon’s public lands—and Oregon’s taxpayers—will not be governed by unchecked bureaucracy.

Thank you for the your time and attention.

Sincerely and with concern,

Jen Hamaker
President
Oregon Natural Resource Industries

Sent from my treehouse made of renewable and sustainable wood.