From: Susan Watkins
To: JWMNR Exhibits
Subject: ODF Budget & Wildfire Protection Act
Date: Monday, May 15, 2017 12:51:50 PM

Dear CoChairs Frederick and Witt and Members of the SubCommittee:

My husband and I own a small woodland outside McMinnville. Since 2002, I have been a Master Woodland Manager. I have also served two terms on the Committee for Family Forestlands, appointed by the Board of Forestry to advise the Board about matters affecting small landowners. My last year, I served as the Committee's Acting Chair.

Wildfire

I was on the Committee when the Legislature passed the Wildfire Protection Act. This Act carefully balanced state budget needs with the extraordinary costs of fighting wildfires in Oregon. Under Oregon's firefighting system, ODF staff, who normally advise landowners like myself or do research or sit at office desks, find themselves physically fighting fires or coordinating resources. Everyone does double duty.

Landowners also do double duty. We make our own firefighting equipment available when needed. And we contribute most of the funds for firefighting through our harvest and property taxes.

Finding the right balance between landowner contributions, state general funds, and insurance proceeds took a great deal of work and compromise by all parties. Please continue to fund this Act. This includes the $1,000,000 "Eastside property tax relief." Eastside lands--and Eastside fires--are not like those here on the West side. West side owners agree that landowners in the East would bear an inequitable burden without this tax relief. Please continue to fund this relief!

ODF Budget

Cutting Private Forests Division funding in ODF is like cutting off your nose to spite your face. There are 44,000 small forest owners in the state; most of us need, and rely on, ODF's assistance in planting and managing our forests. ODF stewardship foresters and researchers help us fight insect infestations, invasive species, and plant disease. They help us choose the right species for our soils and climate. They educate us about best practices and new rules and how to prevent or fight fires.

Both as an MWM and as a member of the CFF, I relied on ODF as well as OSU Forestry Extension and the NW Research Station to provide the scientific basis for policies and practices that would benefit Oregon's 44,000 small forest owners. These services are invaluable. Without this local knowledge base, made available through ODF and Extension statewide, we landowners would have to turn to internet services or materials developed in forests in other states that do not comprise the same species, soils, or climates. Our forests will not thrive as well as they do today.

Please fully fund these services. They make the entire state a better place to work and live.

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