



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Date: February 27, 2019

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Co-Chairs Rep. Reardon and Sen. Taylor
Senator Frederick
Senator Girod
Representative Hayden
Representative Holvey
Representative Neron
Representative Brock Smith

Submitted by: Kaola Swanson, Oregon Program Director, Pacific Forest Trust

Re: Testimony on Department of Forestry Budget- Support for Agency and Fire Capacity

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Committee: For the record, my name is Kaola Swanson, and I am the Oregon Program Director for Pacific Forest Trust. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the budget for the Department of Forestry.

Pacific Forest Trust is a land trust that is focused on working with private landowners to protect their forests for the benefits to climate, water, and wildlife. We have worked in Oregon and California for over 20 years to place more than 100,000 acres of forest land under working forest conservation easements, more than 10,000 of these acres are in Oregon. We are a member of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, which has membership in every county in the state, and we are the current environmental member for the ODF Committee for Family Forestlands. In addition to our work on the ground, Pacific Forest Trust is deeply committed to supporting legislative efforts to bring more funding to the conservation and restoration of forest lands.

We understand the need for long-term fire resiliency planning and are excited to see the Wildfire Council come together. However, the ODF does need support in the interim, as indicated in the request from the Board of Forestry for 55 positions and resources in their Policy Option Package.

To that end, Pacific Forest Trust supports the need for additional funding for ODF to engage in the following activities in the immediate future:

1. Funding for additional staff capacity for fire protection and preparedness in at-risk areas as articulated by ODF, as well as capacity for geospatial analysis, and resource specialists for water and climate.
2. Funding for a new grant program to support wildfire affected communities in developing and implementing smoke management plans and develop mitigation efforts for affected individuals.

We would like to see these efforts funded without reducing existing budget for ODF grant programs or partnerships that support forest health, stewardship, and conservation.

We appreciate your consideration of our suggestion and would be happy to speak further about it. You can reach me at kswanson@pacificforest or at (503) 839-1198.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kaola Swanson". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the end.

Kaola Swanson