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March 7, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 5510 – Support for inclusion of a Sage-grouse LIT position in the ODFW Budget

Dear Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Reardon and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SB5510. Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) is an organization of 10,000 members and supporters dedicated to protecting, defending, and restoring Oregon's high desert. ONDA and its members have a long history of monitoring ecological values and advocating for protection of critical wildlife habitat throughout eastern Oregon including long-standing participation in the Oregon SageCon effort, Sage-grouse Local Implementation Teams (LITs) and the federal sage-grouse planning process.

Successful implementation of sage-grouse conservation actions is the key to stopping the decline of sage-grouse populations and working to recover this iconic species. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) LITs are the entities best-positioned to ensure successful on-the-ground efforts. LITs were established to support efforts within the four eastern Oregon BLM districts (Prineville, Lakeview, Burns, Vale), plus the Baker area. LITs can help ensure coordination among federal, state, local and private partners and develop long-term plans and priorities to guide investment in on-the-ground conservation actions.

SageCon partners have secured funding to support coordinators for the Baker, Prineville and Vale LITs in 2019. Added capacity in the ODFW budget would fulfill the need to support each of the LITs. The new position would work to re-engage local stakeholders, organize meetings, conduct outreach, and work with the LITs to develop long-term implementation plans to reduce threats to sage grouse. ONDA views the LITs as a key component to the successful implementation of the Oregon Sage-grouse Action Plan and the conservation actions needed to protect this species. For these reasons ONDA supports the inclusion of \$200,000 in the ODFW budget to support a coordinator position for the Burns and Lakeview LITs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Morse".

Dan Morse  
Conservation Director  
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