

# Council of Forest Trust Land Counties

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March 28, 2019

Chair Dembrow,  
Vice Chair Olsen, and Members of the  
Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

For the record, I am Susan Morgan, and I staff the Council of Forest Trust Land Counties, a subcommittee of the Association of Oregon Counties. Thank you for the opportunity to move discussions around SB 893 to a workgroup.

The objectives of the CFTLC are (a) Protect the trust and contractual relationship between the forest trust land counties and the State of Oregon, relating to management of the county forest trust lands; (b) Support sound, active management of county forest trust lands, which fulfills their primary purpose of forest production and their important contribution to long-term community sustainability; (c) Protect the flow of revenues from county forest trust lands for essential local public services; (d) Support forest trust land counties in other matters where they may have responsibility related to county forest trust lands; and ( e) Provide an organization that will effectively communicate these objectives.

The CFTLC counties are Tillamook, Clatsop, Clackamas, Columbia, Washington, Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Coos, Douglas, Josephine, Klamath and Lane.

The Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee was statutorily created to consult with the Board of Forestry and the State Forester on the management of the Trust Lands and on other matters which counties may have a responsibility pertaining to forest land. The FTLAC Board is the CFTLC Board.

Right now, the FTLAC is advocating for CFTLC objectives as we are engaged in a discussion about the development of new forest management plan and habitat conservation plan within the Department of Forestry. It is not clear now how land transfers described in SB 893 would affect the Habitat Conservation Plan, or the Forest Management plan that emerges from that process. For example, if salmon anchor habitat were transferred to another ownership, would that result in CFTLC objectives being compromised?

Further, this legislature is in the process of developing a carbon plan for the state. How the outcome of that discussion will interface with the objectives of the CFTLC is unknown.

As the state attempts to develop the management plan and HCP, and a carbon plan, we will continue to advocate for the objectives outlined in our bylaws. We simply do not have the capacity or the information we need to engage in discussions on SB 893 at this time.

In a discussion with Washington Department of Natural Resources, I received information on their land transfer programs. Like Oregon, they have Common School Trust lands, given to the state by the Federal Government at the time of statehood that are mainly managed to fund school construction. Unlike Oregon, they did not block up their lands as we have in the Elliott State Forest. By far the majority of land transfers they do are with this land category, as they endeavor to block up the lands to facilitate timber production to fund schools. They are concerned that the acreage of land they are able to purchase is less than the acreage they are selling, and the effect that has on eroding the land base.

Washington also has trust lands that counties got by foreclosure in the same sequence of events that unfolded in Oregon. These lands (State Forest Land Trust) are also managed by DNR, but in a separate category from the Common School Trust Lands. Transferal of these lands is much more complicated and very few transactions take place in this category. Valuing the land is complex, one of the factors being compensating the loss, in perpetuity, of the revenue generated by the land to counties and local taxing districts.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss these issues with you.