



Date: March 28, 2019
To: Natural Resources Subcommittee of Ways and Means, Co-chairs Taylor and Reardon
From: Laurie Wimmer, OEA Government Relations
RE: *HB 5035*

On behalf of OEA's 45,000 members, I am submitting this testimony in support of the Department of State Lands, who are stewards of the Common School Fund resource for Oregon's public-school students now and in the future.

We are asking the Legislature to strongly consider moving the DSL budget request at the Governor's Recommended Level.

Though the Co-Chairs' budget includes cuts for nearly all program areas, we believe that DSL's unique circumstance may warrant an exception. This budget historically does not lean on General Fund or Lottery dollars and is lean in operations.

We are particularly interested in the innovative solution toward which the state is working with regard to the Elliott State Forest. Though we have been concerned for several years about the forest's depletion of Common School Fund resources, we believe that the idea of developing a potential research forest with OSU will provide an eventual solution that keeps the property in public hands. Policy option packages that maintain the forest and develop a habitat conservation plan seem important in this effort. We also support package 110, which restores the educational programs at the South Slough Reserve.

As for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site expenses, we are unhappy that the schoolchildren of Oregon seem to be on the hook for expenses related to site damage that offending polluters should be paying for. Though the \$6.7 million is allocated in package 101 for legal and environmental work on the site, it is the one hard pill to swallow in this budget.

Overall, we believe that the Department of State Lands is a good partner in managing the Common School Fund trust, committed as they are to managing public lands to benefit education, building the \$1.6 billion CSF corpus, and overseeing other programs that add value to the resource. As a result of this agency's responsible management over the years, schools have been able to receive interest distributions to help fund operations. In 2018, that amounted to \$57.6 million.

Thank you for considering our support for full funding of HB 5035.