



Oregon Small Woodlands Association – SB 5024

Chairman Frederick and members of the Joint Subcommittee on Education. My name is Jim James, Executive Director of the Oregon Small Woodlands Associations and Administrator of the Oregon Tree Farm System. I am here today to ask you to support SB 5024 and to provide adequate funding for the many valuable programs included in this bill. I will speak specifically about the needed funding for Oregon State University's Natural Resource Extension Programs and Forest Research Laboratory, including funding to address the growing state challenges associated with wildfires, important to every Oregonian.

There are over 70,000 family forest owners in Oregon, managing over 3.6 million acres of forestland, 37% of the private forests in Oregon. The majority are not foresters. There are just about as many forest management strategies as there is forest owners, but the one common thread in all family forest owners is their love for their land and their desire to know how best to meet their management objectives and obligations.

The OSU Forestry Extension program and the forestry extension agents are the primary source of this information to family forest owners. Outreach efforts with needed forestry information is in demand and all forestry extension programs are well attended. OSU Forestry Extension is critical to Oregon's family forest owners. The results of these efforts are well managed family forests that benefit all Oregonians.

My only concern of the existing program is that there are not nearly enough Forestry Extension agents. Many have to cover more than two counties and the demand for their services exceeds their capacity. I can tell you first hand, they put in lots of hours, including evenings and weekends. They make a major contribution in keeping Oregon's family forests healthy and productive. I cannot say enough good things about OSU Forestry Extension agents. Both those in the field and those in Corvallis who help create the programs that secure the values of the extension network.

The family forest community needs and demands extension's knowledge and the science from the Forest Research Laboratory feeds that knowledge. All Oregonians benefit.

I believe everyone in Oregon knows the significance of too many wildfires in Oregon. OSU Extension is playing a major role in providing information to prepare a forest to better withstand a wildfire, how to prepare for fire, to understand fire science, and what to do after a fire. Extension has over 30 detailed publications on fire on the Extension website. Including the most recent publication, *Planning and Implementation of Cross-boundary, Landscape Scale Restoration, and Fire Risk Reduction Projects*. It outlines successful collaborative projects between the Fremont-Winema National Forest and its neighboring private forest owners. A great success story in the making. The forestry elements found in HB 5024 are essential in keeping Oregon's forests providing all the public benefits Oregonians demand and expect. Please support all the extension programs. I believe all Oregonians are well served by all extension programs. **Please support SB 5024.**