

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

To: The Ways and Means Subcommittee on  
Natural Resources

From:

Oregon Association of Conservation Districts  
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts  
1000 Friends of Oregon  
American Farmland Trust



Re: Investing in Natural and Working Lands for  
Mitigation and Resilience

Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Reardon, and members of the Subcommittee on Natural Resources,

As a coalition of organizations implementing programs that protect and increase the benefits natural and working lands provide Oregon, **we thank you for including a dedicated investment of 20% of the Climate Investments Fund in natural and working lands in Section 46 of the -84 amendment of HB 2020.** We urge you to maintain or increase this investment as you continue to discuss HB 2020. Investments in climate solutions on natural, agricultural, ranch, and forest lands are highly efficient uses of the funds that would be generated by a cap and trade system, and could help offset potential increased transportation costs that would impact natural resource industries. Oregon's unique voluntary, collaborative approach to conservation means **we have much of the expertise and many of the relationships needed to implement natural and working lands solutions. With the complexity added by climate change itself and by the carbon emissions-specific goals of HB 2020, however, additional investments are urgently needed.**

Natural and working lands are possibly Oregon's greatest resource to decrease the threat of fires, droughts, extreme weather events, and sea level rise: Globally, **37% of emissions can be addressed through natural solutions, and 75% of land in Oregon is forested or in agricultural use.** The same changes are threats to natural and working lands, and to our economy: agriculture is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest economic driver in our state, producing \$50 billion of all annual Oregon sales and \$22.9 billion of Oregon's net state product.

Conservation practices including soil health improvements, riparian restoration, and forest restoration can seize an important opportunity for climate mitigation, while protecting our resources and communities from threats posed by climate change. **Investments in natural solutions are a fitting and highly efficient use of the Climate Investment Fund** because of:

- 1) The cost-effectiveness of sequestration through those methods: For example, more than 250 Tg CO<sub>2</sub>e per year can be sequestered through reforestation at a cost of \$50 per megagram, and 100 Tg CO<sub>2</sub>e per year can be sequestered through cover cropping at a cost of \$10 per megagram (see figure on reverse side).
- 2) The co-benefits of further securing healthy, resilient communities: Natural, agricultural, and forest lands are the natural infrastructure that mitigate flooding and sea level rise, support biodiversity through diverse and healthy habitat, and provide clean and resilient water resources.

To ensure we don't lose these opportunities to protect our natural resources and rural communities, we ask you to maintain or increase the 20% dedicated investment in natural and working lands in section 46 of HB 2020-84. **We encourage the Legislature to also add a voting member to the Oregon Climate Board who represents working lands to ensure the appropriate expertise is available to the Board and Climate Authority.**

Thank you for considering these comments.

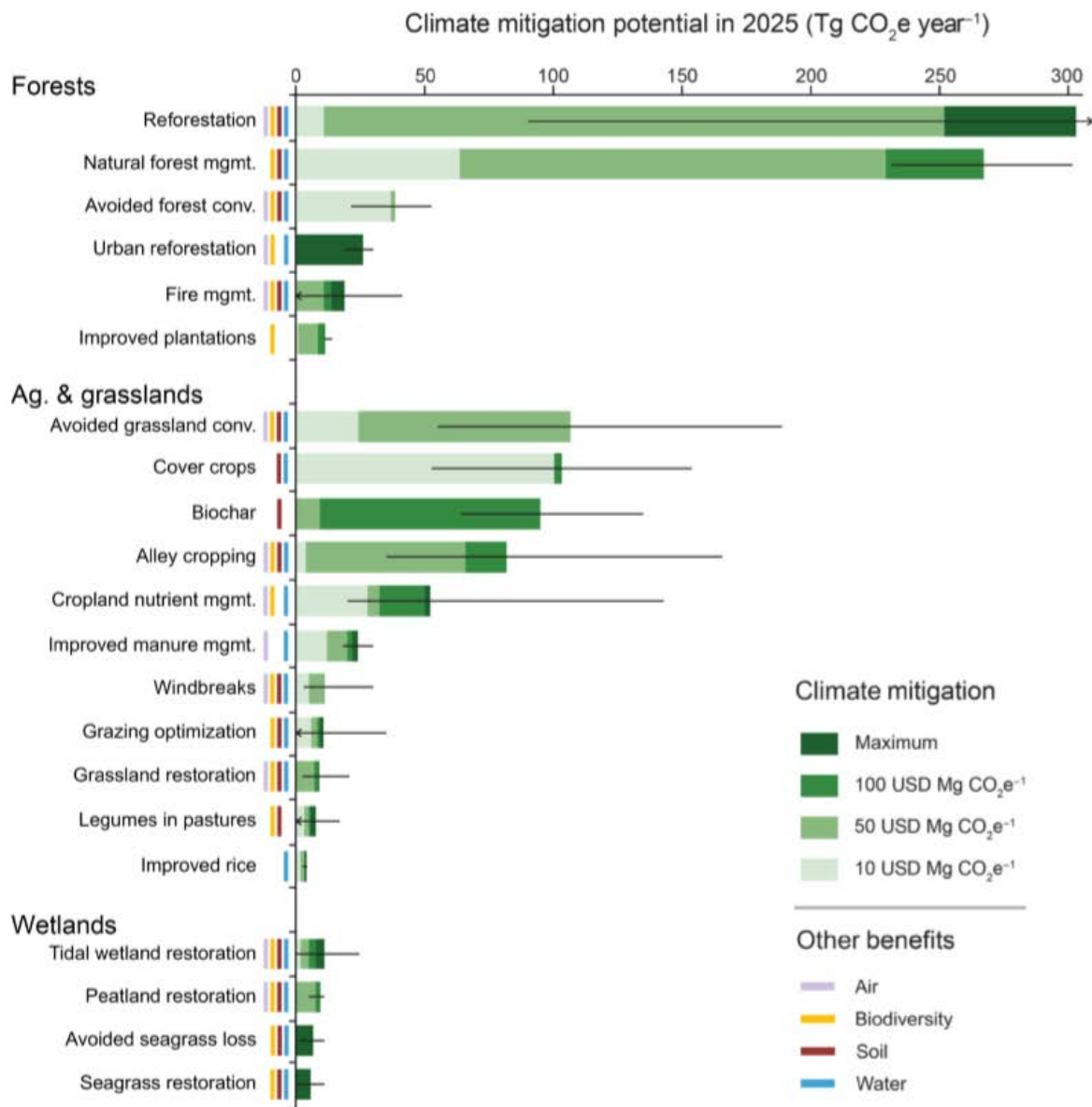


Figure: Climate mitigation potential and cobenefits of conservation practices on natural and working lands (Fargione, et al. 2018). The “Climate mitigation” key indicates the cost of per megagram of CO<sub>2</sub>e of sequestering carbon through those practices. Cost increases with increased sequestration at different thresholds for different practices. For instance, sequestering 50 Tg CO<sub>2</sub>e per year through reforestation is more expensive than sequestering the same amount through natural forest management. The full article by Fargione, et al. (2018) is available in the meeting materials for HB 2020 (submitted with Oregon Association of Conservation Districts testimony on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019).