

HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 1

By JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

May 9

1 On page 1 of the printed joint memorial, delete lines 6 through 31.

2 On page 2, delete lines 1 through 9 and insert:

3 “Whereas national forests, revested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands (O&C lands) and
4 other lands owned by the United States make up nearly 53 percent of the land base in the State of
5 Oregon, yet those federal lands pay no property taxes to support local government services or
6 schools; and

7 “Whereas national forests and O&C lands were made subject to federal legislation in 1908, 1911
8 and 1937 that required the federal government to share proceeds from timber sales to help support
9 counties and schools, and for many decades shared federal timber receipts were a substantial con-
10 tributor to the economic well-being of communities, local governments and schools; and

11 “Whereas environmental concerns and changing national priorities in the 1990s resulted in
12 drastic reductions in timber harvests from national forests and O&C lands, with correspondingly
13 drastic reductions in payments to counties and schools in Oregon and more than 40 other states,
14 creating severe funding shortages for many counties and schools; and

15 “Whereas United States Senator Ron Wyden from Oregon coauthored and was an original
16 cosponsor of the bipartisan Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000
17 (SRS), which honored the federal government’s historic commitment to rural communities where the
18 federal government holds land, establishing a payment formula for counties and schools that had
19 previously received revenue-sharing payments from national forests and O&C lands; and

20 “Whereas SRS has brought more than \$3.1 billion to Oregon counties and schools-to keep
21 teachers in classrooms, sheriffs on the job and roads in good repair-but the annual payments under
22 SRS have declined in recent years, and the law has expired and been extended several times; and

23 “Whereas each reauthorization of SRS has been increasingly difficult due to the political envi-
24 ronment in Congress, resulting in great uncertainty and instability in the budgeting processes of
25 counties and schools; and

26 “Whereas SRS is currently expired, and no payment will be made for fiscal year 2019 or there-
27 after unless there is a reauthorization, again creating uncertainty and chaos in the budgeting pro-
28 cesses of dependent local governments; and

29 “Whereas Senator Wyden has recognized the need for a long-term solution that provides cer-
30 tainty and stability in payments to counties and schools and makes a dependable contribution to the
31 support of local communities; and

32 “Whereas Senator Wyden coauthored and was an original cosponsor of the bipartisan Forest
33 Management for Rural Stability Act (FMRSA), which was introduced in the Senate in 2018 and
34 which Senator Wyden has stated he will reintroduce in 2019 and seek action on by Congress; and

35 “Whereas FMRSA would greatly benefit counties and schools in more than 40 states, none more

1 so than Oregon, providing guaranteed annual payments that are no less than the SRS payments for
2 2017, which totaled more than \$96 million in Oregon, and the minimum would be adjusted upward
3 each year in the future by the rate of inflation; and

4 “Whereas FMRSA would employ a bold and creative mechanism to ensure permanent payments
5 to counties and schools by initially funding an endowment that would be invested and managed for
6 the benefit of counties and schools and into which any shared timber receipts also would be depos-
7 ited over time, from which annual payments would be made to counties and schools based on
8 endowment fund deposits and earnings; and

9 “Whereas FMRSA is supported by the Association of Oregon Counties, the Association of O&C
10 Counties, the National Association of Counties, the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition
11 and many other entities, each of which recognizes the need for a modern and permanent version of
12 SRS that would create certainty and predictability and would satisfy that need without severing the
13 links between communities and their nearby federal forest lands; now, therefore,”.

14 Delete lines 11 through 14 and insert:

15 “That we, the members of the Eightieth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the Congress
16 of the United States to pass, and the President to sign, the Forest Management for Rural Stability
17 Act before the close of federal fiscal year 2019; and be it further”.