

## Testimony in Support of HB2386

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Please enter this testimony in support of HB 2386 into the record.

### **Justification for an Independent Science Review Board**

Recent wildfires and severe droughts related to climate change are putting huge pressures on Oregon's natural and built ecosystems and these stressors will likely get more severe in the future. In order for the legislature to set policy and for state agencies to implement those policies to effectively deal with these issues, we need to ensure that the best available science is used to inform these difficult natural resource and environmental decisions. In short, we need sound science that will help create laws and make informed decisions that can have long term benefits for all Oregonians.

Oregon would benefit from an Independent Science Review (ISR) process particularly for issues that are multi-agency and very complex, such as avoiding and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

Specific benefits of an independent science review process include:

1. Would foster an up-to-date and more holistic understanding of the natural resource challenges that take place.
2. Would provide additional legitimacy, transparency and credibility.
3. Would reduce the perception of bias and improve the quality of science used for decision making.
4. Would help agencies stay abreast with current science and help build relationships with experts in the field.

Because Oregonians are diverse and have differing options on policies, it is essential that bias be avoided in setting and implementing natural resource policy.

This is how ISR will mitigate bias in making and implementing natural resource policy:

1. Would produce unbiased conclusions regarding the current understanding of the relevant information, methodology, and assumptions relating to that scientific question or issue;
2. Would include, as applicable, an assessment of the risks, costs and benefits of potential alternative decisions or policies; and,
3. Is conducted by the reviewers who:
  - Have demonstrable scientific competence in the subject as evidenced by formal training and/or experience; and,

- Can perform the review tasks free without being influenced by others associated with the decision process;
- Lack a personal stake in the outcome of decisions or policies, in terms of financial gain or loss, career advancement, or personal or professional relationships;
- Should be required to disclose any potential personal stake or conflict of interest with respect to the stated question/issue.