



Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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"Voice of forest management working families since 1969"

May 19, 2021

The Honorable Kathleen Taylor and Jeff Reardon, Co-Chairs
Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: SB 5518 - **SUPPORT**

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the Department of Forestry's budget today. My name is Amanda Astor and I serve as forest policy manager for the Associated Oregon Loggers where I have the honor to carry the weight of nearly 1000 member companies, their more than 22,000 employees and their families.

You see, loggers and other forest contractors are an integral part of the fabric of the entire forestry profession. If AOL's members cannot successfully run their businesses, we lose the workforce that allows forest roads to be maintained, affordable wood to be purchased from the store, our eyes and ears during fire season and we lose Oregon's competitive edge in curbing climate change.

Our contract operators provide essential resources that are usually the first response to forest fires. AOL members deliver early fire detection and initial attack that is part of Oregon's unique complete and coordinated fire system.

AOL urges this subcommittee to maintain ODF's role in Oregon's fire control system and we believe these "in-kind" contributions should be adequately studied before additional costs are passed down to those already directly supporting the complete and coordinated fire system.

ODF should be given the resources they need to operate at full capacity for the sake of all Oregonians. This includes an adequate staff and severity resources to get the job done. Forest contractors stand willing and able to play our part in this essential duty.

To achieve the state's forest resiliency needs and address the state's forest health crisis, we need to ensure ODF is fully staffed and funded to implement the Shared Stewardship Agreement we signed in August 2019 by supporting the Partnerships and Planning Program including but not limited to the staffing needs in the Good Neighbor Authority Program. By addressing the capacity issues in this self-sustaining program, we can grow our meaningful footprint on the ground, employ local contractors and achieve forest health goals at a nominal cost which is mostly recuperated through project revenue derived from the programs work.

With the mounting need to address wildfire risk across the state, the legislature should be funding these programs in a way that, at the very least, allows them to operate at full capacity to achieve their current charge.



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AOL's members also rely on the ability for ODF to provide training on forest practices act changes that help to achieve enhanced protections during forest operations. Changes happen often and the work of the Private Forest Division is critical.

Lastly, many of AOL's members exclusively work on State Forest Lands. The work completed by the State Forest Division allows these small family forest contractors to be successful and provides funding to their local communities.

Now is the time for the state to recognize the critical nature of the work of the Department of Forestry, fund the department at full capacity and prioritize the work the department is doing that could increase the benefits received from these heroes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of you today and I am available for any questions.

Kindly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Astor', written over a horizontal line.

Amanda Astor, CCF (she/her/hers)
Forest Policy Manager
Associated Oregon Loggers