



STARKER
FORESTS, INC.

www.starkerforests.com 541-929-2477 (office)
7240 SW Philomath Blvd. | Corvallis, OR 97333
PO Box 809 | Corvallis, OR 97339

May 19, 2021

RE: SB 5518

Co-Chair's Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

I write to you representing Starker Forests, a fifth-generation family-owned forestland owner in Corvallis.

We would like to advocate that the ODF budget continue to fund the administration of the Oregon Forest Practices Act at the current division of costs, that is 60/40, rather than make an adjustment that increases the contribution rate from forest landowners.

As a forester, I routinely see what implementation of the OFPA looks like on the ground, and I can assure you it is not done by people sitting at a desk. At Starker Forests, our professional forestry staff regularly communicates and cooperates with ODF stewardship foresters, including frequent collaboration in the woods, to implement the OFPA. Whether we are constructing a road, installing a culvert for fish passage, or implementing a timber harvest, our work is guided by the laws, and we fully support a regulatory system that confirms compliance on the ground.

As professional foresters and responsible forestland stewards, our goal is 100% compliance with the forest practice laws, attained through our interactions and engagements with the ODF Stewardship Foresters. ODF reports that industry compliance with the OFPA routinely exceeds 95%, and we want to keep it that way. We know that the implementation of the OFPA means that we can count on technical advice, operations inspections, and enforcement of the rules from the more than 50 Stewardship Foresters at ODF.

It is vital this program is administered in the interest of the public good. The credibility of the program should not be eroded by the perception that a regulatory system is funded disproportionately by those being regulated. No other private sector protects vast public resources like air, water, carbon storage and wildlife habitat like the forest sector. It is appropriate that the General Fund bear a greater portion of the costs to implement that protection.

We would like to additionally comment on the proposed shift in the admin pro-rate. Oregon's complete and coordinated system is excellent example of a system where state and private resources work in cooperation to protect Oregon's forestlands. The current allocation acknowledges the in-kind resources that private landowners contribute to the Oregon each fire season. Shifting the costs to make landowners pay more ignores the in-kind resources that private landowners provide to fire preparedness and fire protection.

While we did not experience fires on our lands during the Labor Day fires, we contributed 65 hours of trained firefighting personnel on Labor Day alone directly to our ODF district offices to backfill their engines and firefighters that had left the district. Landowners contribute to the system with personnel and equipment to



increase capacity when there was none left for state and federal resources. This is not a time to devalue those resources.

At Starker Forests we provide fire trucks, water tankers, associated equipment, and trained personnel to the complete and coordinated system. Additionally, our fire-trained contractors bring additional fire trucks and personnel who are ready to mobilize to a fire.

We think the complete and coordinated system shows our commitment to doing the right thing when it comes to protecting not just our forestlands, but all of Oregon's forest lands. The in-kind contributions of forest landowners shows that we are always willing to support ODF and Oregon in protecting the important forest resource.

As House Speaker Tina Kotek said today of the Oregon revenue forecast, "Today's forecast is stunning." With an unanticipated billion dollars for the budget, billions in reserves, plus billions in federal relief dollars, it is shocking that the legislature is considering increasing the cost burden on forest landowners. We cannot think of a policy justification for shifting these costs to private landowners – it is effectively budget dust to the General Fund but is a significant amount to landowners - for no benefit whatsoever. We do not get acknowledgement of our in-kind firefighting contributions, we do not get extra Stewardship Foresters, we don't get additional compliance or effectiveness monitoring, and we do not get any increased capacity at ODF of any kind. Just increased costs and erosion of public confidence in the administration of the Oregon Forest Practice Act program.

Please oppose these unnecessary cost shifts onto private landowners.

Thank you.

Jennifer Beathe

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Beathe".

Starker Forests, Inc.