

February 22, 2021

Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Testimony on SB 5530, Department of Land Conservation & Development Budget

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Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a science-based, non-partisan organization committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Oregon, TNC has over 80,000 supporters and members in every county. Based in communities around the state, we manage lands and waters in varied ecosystems and partner with ranchers, farmers, fishers, timber and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature.

Addressing climate change is a top priority for TNC in Oregon and around the world. Oregon's communities are already feeling the effects of climate change, experiencing catastrophic fires, devastating ice storms, droughts and floods, all of which harm our health, damage crops and imperil the economic strength of Oregon's rural communities. It is the most vulnerable members of our society who bear the greatest burdens of climate change. Oregon has a responsibility to enact policies that address its contributions to climate change and provide funding to enable the necessary responses.

As you consider the budget for the Department of Conservation and Development (DLCD), we encourage you to support the following climate-related investments:

Maintain DLCD Staff and Resources to Administer Oregon's Land Use System

One of Oregon's climate assets is our robust land use system. Retaining adequate planning staff and resources in DLCD will ensure that Oregon can build upon its legacy of protecting farmland and preventing the conversion of natural and working lands, which sequester and store carbon while protecting habitats, watersheds and communities.

POP 111: Climate Adaptation Framework

TNC supports DLCD's efforts to undertake the vital work of adapting our communities to the growing impacts of climate change. We encourage the legislature to fund the agency's work to coordinate its 25 partner agencies to implement the framework and improve the resilience of Oregon's communities to future climate challenges.

POP 112: Climate Mitigation

Adaptation alone is insufficient to address climate change. It is also imperative that we continue to direct resources to reducing Oregon's emissions as we adapt to the changes we already see and can expect in the future. TNC supports the rulemaking and planning efforts described in this POP and encourages your approval of its funding request.

Thank you for your consideration of these investments and their positive impact on Oregon's lands, waters and communities.