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**Testimony of the
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA)
to the
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery
Oregon State Legislature**

**By Glen Spain,
PCFFA NW Regional Director
February 3, 2022**

**In Support of SB 1501 and SB 1502
(Private Forest Accord Implementation Bills)**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these two important bills on behalf of the west coast commercial salmon fishing fleet and its many coastal, salmon-dependent businesses.

I am the long-time Northwest Regional Director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), which is the west coast's largest commercial fishing industry trade association, representing the interests of hundreds of west coast commercial fishing-dependent families, communities and businesses.

Many of our commercial fishing families depend heavily for their economic livelihoods on there being healthy, abundant and harvestable salmon runs coming from Oregon's rivers. But those salmon are "anadromous," which means they lay their eggs in Oregon's inland forest freshwater streams, those eggs hatch and the young salmon swim to the sea where they grow to adulthood, and then they return three years later as spawning adults to the very same forested streams they came from, to lay eggs for their next generation.

STEWARDS OF THE FISHERIES

*Thus Oregon's valuable salmon fisheries are directly tied to the health of Oregon's forests. Salmon are in fact one of Oregon's most valuable forest products – provided those forests are properly managed to protect both ecosystem benefits (which include clean water for many Oregon cities, as well as healthy salmon runs) and for sustainable forestry. *These two goals are not incompatible.**

Unfortunately, Oregon does not yet have sustainable logging practices. Decades of poor logging practices and erosion from legacy logging road networks in Oregon have greatly increased the number of landslides in Oregon's forests, leading to destructive sedimentation and increased stream water temperatures that kill young salmon and destroy salmon eggs. *As a result, Oregon's commercial salmon fisheries have lost more than 80% of their historic productivity.*

This resource loss has resulted in severe economic stress on coastal salmon-dependent communities throughout the state, as well as depressing commercial ocean harvests in California and Washington, through which Oregon-origin salmon would in the past have typically migrated and also been harvested.

The Private Forest Accord Offers an Unparalleled Opportunity

Unfortunately, Oregon's archaic Forest Practices Rules currently do not protect either Oregon's valuable salmon runs nor its primary sources of clean water. This has led to decades of conflict between our industry as well as city and county water purveyors, and the timber industry.

Then in February, 2020, a far-sighted group of conservation and fishing interests on the one hand, and forest product industry groups on the other, reached an historic and mutually respectful agreement to cooperatively negotiate much needed updates to the Oregon Forest Practices Act, seeking a better way than constant conflicts and gridlock. The parties reached an initial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to structure future negotiations, and this effort was embodied in 2020 legislation passed as SB 1602 with nearly unanimous approval in a late June, 2020 Special Session. PCFFA was the major fishing industry participant in that negotiating group.

And remarkably, over the next 10 months of hard negotiations, on October 30, 2021, the group reached a Settlement Agreement – the *Private Forest Accord*. That Agreement is embodied in current **SB 1501**, which is before this Committee now. Its companion bill, **SB 1502**, is also part of that Settlement Agreement, and embodies a tax credit program for small forestland owners who wish to abide by the same standards that SB 1501 provides for large industrial landowners.

Modernizing Oregon's Forest Practices Act to improve riparian buffer zones, prevent landslides, protect drinking water and recover valuable salmon habitat is good for the Oregon economy, will end decades of conflict in Oregon's "timber wars," and finally put Oregon's forest practices on a truly sustainable basis, including a long-term stability which is also good for timber industry jobs and communities.

PCFFA urges the Committee to approve these two *Private Forest Accord* bills (SB 1501 and SB 1502) and pass them on for a full floor vote as soon as possible.

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