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Submitted Testimony for SB1546-1
Senate Natural Resource and Wildfire Recovery Committee

Good afternoon Chair Golden and members of the Committee.

I am Mark Stern, and I am recently retired from The Nature Conservancy in Oregon and am a member of the Elliott State Forest Advisory Committee, where I have represented conservation interests.

As you heard at the informational hearing on Tuesday, all of us on the Advisory Committee worked long and hard to merge our interests and desired outcomes for the Elliott into an unanimously supported agreement as represented in Senate Bill 1546-1 . I offer kudos also to the Land Board staff and the Department of State Lands for guiding this effort.

With the Elliott TODAY, we have a unique moment in time and it is worth noting. We have a carefully crafted agreement, balanced on a tetter totter, with strong outcomes for and supported by Conservation and Environmental Groups, Timber interests, Counties, Tribes, Schools, and the local community. We are protecting over 90% of the older trees, benefiting murrelets, owls and coho salmon. These protections will also have significant carbon benefits that will help Oregon achieve its goals for climate resiliency. Importantly, the agreement will also generate 17 MBF of timber annually on long 60-year rotations. The Agreement will involve the Tribes and the local community as key partners and will support the Common School Fund. We have an opportunity NOW   for a pragmatic agreement that solves long-standing issues for the greater good of Oregon, and notably and importantly for Oregon schools.

I urge you to support SB 1546-1 in its current form, pass it out of committee and similarly and importantly support the companion request at Ways and Means for the funding that will make the Common School Fund whole.

I would be glad to be available for follow up discussion. Thank-you for this opportunity to testify today.

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