

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
RULES AND
ADMINISTRATION

February 17, 2023

To: Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources
From: U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley

Re: SB 753

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod and Members of the Committee,

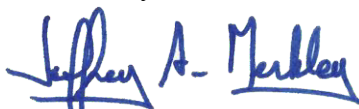
In 2017, I partnered with then Representative Brock Smith to convene a group of stakeholders in Southern Oregon who are committed to addressing the spread of Sudden Oak Death (SOD), a pathogen that poses severe economic and environmental threats to counties in Southern Oregon. Since that time, our state has proven to be a leader in working to contain SOD and the European strain of the pathogen, EU1. This leadership has been demonstrated through remarkable coordination across party lines, all levels of government, and a broad swath of industries. Continued collaboration to address the spread of SOD and EU1 remains essential to the work of preventing the devastating impacts of the pathogen on our local economy and environment.

In my role on the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, I have fought for the federal resources necessary to support efforts in Oregon to address Southern Oak Death, and I will continue to do so in my role as the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service. However, the ability to blend resources—including from the state legislature—will be critical to our continued, collective efforts to address the threats that Sudden Oak Death poses to communities in Southern Oregon.

Senator David Brock Smith and I have worked together for years with a team of experts and stakeholders to fight for the resources necessary to work collaboratively on a diversity of solutions to address Sudden Oak Death pathogens. I applaud Senator Brock Smith's leadership in sponsoring SB 753, which will bring additional support and collaboration to the ongoing issue of Sudden Oak Death in Southern Oregon. I support his call for continued and increased support of a critical, integrated pest management program throughout Curry County.

I urge the Committee to support SB 753. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United State Senator