

5/3/2023

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I'm writing on behalf of the DPO's Environmental Caucus to express our strong support for funding SB 530 the Natural Climate Solutions bill. This bill will advance Oregon policy to establish incentives and technical support for actions that will reduce our carbon footprint by at least 15 percent. Climate change is costing Oregon billions from wildfire, drought and floods.ⁱ

Natural climate solutions are common sense land management strategies with multiple other benefits such as:

- Planting trees in riparian areas will also reduce runoff and improve water quality.
- Planting cover crops on agricultural lands also reduces water demand/fertilizers.
- Growing trees longer resulting in more harvestable tree fiber and improves the forested areas with improved water resources.
- Protecting mature and old-growth forests on public lands thereby increasing biodiversity and water protection.
- Rotating grazing on rangelands.
- Urban tree planting to reduce heat islands.

The incentive fund is needed to spur these activities. SB 530 will:

- Leverage large amounts of federal funding from \$60-\$180 million in next biennium in Oregon (often at a 10-25% match).
- Fund and direct state agencies to provide technical support to forest owners, farmers, and ranchers to implement natural climate solutions.
- Allow Oregon to develop a natural and working lands carbon inventory to measure gains and study opportunities for workforce development and training.
- Provide at least 15% reduction in our net carbon pollution emissions.ⁱⁱ
- Stimulate job growth in rural areas with reforestation, plantation pre-commercial thinning, wetland restoration.

Natural climate solutions reduce all the impacts of climate change that we are already witnessing at the rebuilding costs into the billions. It does so by protecting ecosystems function to better clean and store water and support forest resiliency, so we are more resistant to wildfire, flooding and drought. Given the tight state budget this year, it is important that Oregon do everything it can to leverage additional federal resources. This is an example of an ounce of protection providing a pound of cure.

Sincerely,

Catherine Thomasson, MD
Vice Chair, DPO Environmental Caucus

ⁱ Dalton, M., and E. Fleishman, editors. 2021. Fifth Oregon Climate Assessment. Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.
<https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/occri/oregon-climate-assessments/>.

ⁱⁱ Graves, R, et.al,"Potential greenhouse gas reductions from Natural Climate Solutions in Oregon, USA". Plos One, April 10, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0230424>