



Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee:

I'm writing on behalf of The Understory Initiative to express our strong support for \$5M in OWEB's budget for renewal of the Natural and Working Lands Fund, which provides incentives and technical support to help landowners, land managers, environmental justice communities, and Tribes adopt practices that support natural climate solutions on Oregon's natural and working lands.

Natural climate solutions help increase ecosystem resilience. They help manage wildfire risk, improve water filtration and storage, cool water temperatures, maintain biodiversity, provide pollinator habitat, soil health, reduce flood damage, and more. As the climate changes, these benefits help increase Oregon's overall resilience to climate disturbances and severe events like wildfire, floods, and heat domes.

Natural climate solutions take time to establish and will cost more to build in the future. The sooner natural climate solutions are implemented, the more they can help lessen the magnitude of disturbance events and potentially reduce future damages and costs. The Fund is 1-year old and is doing great work, but sustained support creates momentum that moves the work from a start-up phase to an established effort that can start reaping returns on the initial investment.

I urge your support for the inclusion of the \$5M investment of the NWL Fund in OWEB's budget for the 2025-2027 biennium. Thank you!

Thank you,  
*Kathryn Prive*  
Executive Director, The Understory Initiative