

Submitter: Shadrach Wood

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Natural Resources

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5521

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy, and Members of the Committee:

The Private Forest Accord (PFA) was a landmark agreement regarding Oregon's logging rules on private forestlands. Thirteen timber industry representatives and 13 conservation and fishing groups came together to negotiate broad reforms to state law. It provides significant new protections for fish, stream-dwelling amphibians, wildlife in the forests adjacent to streams, for cold clean water, and for the people who rely on these resources.

Conserving our wild spaces has always been important to myself and my family. Every summer growing up we would spend weeks at various campgrounds and parks across the state. My grandfather, now deceased, loved getting out into nature, going on hikes and long walks around our community as well as caring for many fruit trees and other plants. He helped me learn about the responsibility I owe to the plants, animals, fungi, and other creatures that form the world around us. Humans like ourselves are uniquely situated. We can advocate for nature on behalf of those that cannot speak for themselves, but we can also forget that we do not exist in isolation. There is no functioning society that can exist if the ecosystems that support us are degraded or destroyed. It's a cliché but we owe the entirety of our civilization to plants, pollinators, several inches of topsoil, and the fact that it rains. Functioning environments also provide invisible services such as carbon fixing that are compounded the more they are protected. In addition to the goods that functioning ecosystems provide for human use, we also have a responsibility to stand up for other living things. Plants and animals have a right to exist that should supersede our collective human need for convenience. A living thing does not have to be useful for humans for it to be beautiful, to fill important environmental niches, to live. If we do not take action to preserve our wild spaces, then who will? Steps like the Private Forest Accord are necessary to preserve our wild spaces, both for their own sake as well as ours.

A key part of the agreement calls for the state of Oregon to get a federally approved Habitat Conservation Plan across more than 10 million acres of private forestlands.

However, without a federally approved Private Forest Accord Habitat Conservation Plan by 2027, the new rules roll back entirely to the outdated standards.

Please support full funding in the Oregon Department of Forestry's budget (SB 5521)

for two critical PFA programs. The SFISH grant program for small forestland owners should be fully funded at \$10 million and the Adaptive Management Program designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the new rules should be fully funded at \$6 million.

Thanks for your consideration,

Shadrach Wood (he/him/his)