



Service Employees  
International Union  
Local 503

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 1259  
Salem, OR 97309-1259

3470 Pipebend Pl NE  
Salem, OR 97301

525 NE Oregon St.  
Portland, OR 97232

1.844.503.SEIU (7348)

[www.seiu503.org](http://www.seiu503.org)

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

From: Mike Powers, SEIU Local 503

RE: Support for SB 5521

Date: March 12, 2025

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

My name is Mike Powers, and I am the Immediate Past President and a Policy Strategist for SEIU Local 503. Our union represents over 72,000 Oregonians across every county in the state, including the dedicated staff at the Oregon Department of Forestry. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) in SB 5521, along with additional funding requests.

The staff at the Oregon Department of Forestry are highly trained professionals committed to managing Oregon's forests, timber, recreation areas, wildlife, and surface and groundwater. They are also essential wildland firefighters, protecting both public and private lands. These dedicated workers provide critical services to the people of Oregon

We appreciate that the GRB allocates approximately \$224 million over the Current Service Level (CSL) budget, including \$134 million in General Funds. We are particularly grateful for the increased investment in wildfire management, including a \$135 million contribution to the State Forestry Department Cash Flow Repayment Fund. The GRB also creates new positions to manage vital resources and enhance operational capabilities.

However, we note that there are important items not included in the GRB that our members believe are needed. These include \$6 million to continue the work of the Adaptive Management Program. Additionally, we request continued funding for SB 762 fire resilience programs, including \$10 million for Landscape Resiliency and \$2.5 million for Small Forestland Grants to reduce wildfire risks on public and private lands. As climate change leads to hotter and more unpredictable conditions, these investments are crucial for building resilience, particularly for rural communities across Oregon.

Given the importance of Oregon's forests and working lands to both the state's economy and climate resilience, we strongly support these funding requests and call for continued investment in the Oregon Department of Forestry. We urge your support for the GRB and the additional funding needed to protect the people and resources of Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.