Submitter: Joann Koch

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5009

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

The Private Forest Accord (PFA) is the result of hard negotiations, and a commitment on both sides to finding solutions to complex problems. It's the first major update to the Oregon Forest Practices Act in decades, negotiated by 13 conservation groups and 13 timber industry representatives. The PFA improves protections for fish and water quality, while also providing more certainty for forest landowners.

The funding in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's budget (HB 5009) for the Private Forest Accord Grant Program is essential to completing the work to implement the PFA. 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. Without a federally approved Private Forest Accord Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) by 2027, the new rules roll back entirely to the outdated standards.

Please support HB 5009 to fund ODFW for the Private Forest Accord Grant Program. The PFA Grant Program should be fully funded at $20M. This reflects the state's commitment of $10M annually to this grant program under the PFA authorizing legislation from 2022 (SB 1501). Importantly, this commitment is matched by a $2.5M annual contribution from the timber industry, which increases to $5M annually after federal approval of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). This program invests in restoration projects across the state to conserve and protect habitat for fish and amphibians.

The work of the PFA can guide forestry on private land for generations. Let's secure these improved protections for clean water, forests, and fish now and into the future by fully funding these programs.

Thank you for listening to me even though I'm not a resident of Oregon,
Joann Koch
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