

Submitter: Susan Wechsler

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:

Oregon has made significant investments in bringing the Private Forest Accord this far. This precedent-setting agreement between conservation and timber interests improves protections for clean water and fish while providing more certainty for forest landowners.

Now it's time to secure the wins of the Private Forest Accord (PFA) to ensure that the state has a clear path to securing a federally approved Habitat Conservation Plan by 2027. Together, we can make sure these improved protections are sustained for generations.

Please fully fund the Private Forest Accord Grant Program at \$20M in the 2025-2027 state budget. This reflects the state's commitment of \$10M annually to this grant program under the PFA authorizing legislation from 2022 (SB 1501). This contribution is in addition to a \$2.5M annual contribution from the timber industry that increases to \$5M annually after federal approval of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). This long-term investment is a core part of the negotiated agreements and to securing a federally approvable HCP by December 2027.

Without a solid commitment to fund core conservation programs, Oregon's path to a federally approved PFA HCP is uncertain. With your leadership and prioritization of this process, Oregon has its best chance to secure a federally approved HCP.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. Please fully fund the Private Forest Accord Grant Program at \$20M in the 2025-2027 state budget.

Sincerely,
Susan Wechsler