

Submitter: Helena Birecki

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:

I currently live in Portland, but I used to live in Tillamook County and my drinking water came from the Hawk Creek Watershed. A big concern of our water district was increased sedimentation from increased timber harvest near the watershed, and the district noted that "protecting watersheds lowers drinking water treatment costs, avoids expensive restoration, minimizes damage from natural disasters, and increases adjacent property values, among other benefits."

Oregon has made significant investments in bringing the Private Forest Accord this far. Don't waste this precedent-setting agreement between conservation and timber interests improves protections for people's water. It also helps fish and wildlife.

It's time to secure the wins of the Private Forest Accord (PFA) and 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments.

Sincerely,  
Helena Birecki

\*<https://neskowinwater.com/home/watershedinformation/>