

4/3/2025

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

I write to you as a wildlife biologist concerned about the preservation and conservation of natural resources.

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, as well as for clean water and people who rely on those resources.

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approved Private Forest Accord Habitat Conservation Plan by 2027, however, the new rules roll back entirely to the outdated standards.

Please support full funding in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's budget (HB 5009) 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 invaluable wildlife that depend on them.

It is far less expensive and logistics-laden to support proactive conservation than to spend reactively on diminished or unnecessarily lost resources.

Thanks for your consideration,

Dr. Brian Blais,
Wildlife Biologist