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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3846

House Bill 3846 is, in essence, a thinly veiled attempt to transfer federal land to state control by leasing the Ochoco National Forest to the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). This proposal would add 845,498 acres to ODF's existing 738,402 acres of state forest lands, significantly expanding its management area. With ODF already facing budgetary challenges and limited capacity, this expansion would likely push the Ochoco National Forest toward extractive uses at the expense of public access and ecological health.

The bill raises serious concerns about potentially restricted access to these lands for hunting, angling, and other recreational activities that are crucial to Oregon's outdoor traditions and economy. By potentially bypassing NEPA oversight, this legislation could reduce public participation and environmental review, allowing state management to prioritize extractive industries over balanced, multiple-use management. Existing programs like the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) have successfully demonstrated collaborative management and proactive fire mitigation measures without the need for leasing or land transfer, thus preserving public access and environmental safeguards.