

April 5, 2025

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

Re: Opposition to HB 3846 – Protecting the Integrity of Federal Public Land Management

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), I write in opposition to HB 3846.

TRCP is a national nonprofit working to guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish. In Oregon, we collaborate with local communities, landowners, and decision-makers to ensure responsible stewardship of our public lands and fish and wildlife resources. We believe federal public lands are a national treasure—central to the outdoor heritage, economic vitality, and conservation legacy of our state and country.

HB 3846 would authorize the Oregon Department of Forestry to negotiate a lease for the entirety of the Ochoco National Forest. While the bill is framed as an opportunity to explore new models of management, it sets a dangerous precedent—one that undermines the systems and safeguards that have protected our public lands for generations.

Oregon already has tools to enhance federal-state collaboration. Existing authorities such as the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) offer meaningful pathways for the state to engage in forest stewardship without disrupting the foundational principles of federal land management. These tools allow Oregon to co-manage projects focused on restoration, wildfire resilience, and habitat improvement—while maintaining the public transparency and accountability required under federal law.

HB 3846 seeks to bypass those systems entirely. It raises profound questions about how a lease of this scale would comply with federal law, including the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)—cornerstones of public land governance that ensure broad stakeholder participation,

science-based decision-making, and long-term sustainability. Removing those safeguards does not improve land management—it erodes the very foundation of public trust.

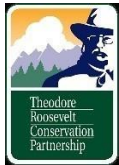
Additionally, this proposal imposes a significant burden on the Oregon Department of Forestry—an agency already tasked with managing 745,000 acres of state forest lands, while navigating complex wildfire recovery, private land obligations, and funding challenges. HB 3846 offers no clarity on how the department would assume management responsibilities for a national forest nearly the same size as its current portfolio, nor how it would be resourced to do so.

Across Oregon, hunters, anglers, and rural communities depend on national forests like the Ochoco for access, opportunity, shared conservation values and a diversity of economic activities. Turning public land into a policy experiment threatens to erode those values and undermine the multi-use system that has long served the public interest.

Oregonians deserve solutions that strengthen collaboration—not ones that destabilize it. HB 3846 opens the door to unintended consequences, legal uncertainty, and a troubling shift away from the shared management of our public lands.

We urge the Committee to reject HB 3846 and recommit to existing tools and partnerships that are already working. Together, we can protect the places that matter—for wildlife, for people, and for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.



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