



April 18, 2025

Representatives Girod and Nosse, Co-chairs
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Salem, OR 97310

**RE: Support for Capital Funding - Oregon State Forester's Office Building Restoration
(Oregon Dept. of Forestry)**

Dear Rep Girod and Nosse, Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

We strongly support the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) effort to secure funding for the complete restoration of the Oregon State Forester's Office Building in SB5505 at the full request of \$20,180,000 plus bond issuance costs. We ask that you make this funding request a high priority at this level based on both the critical need to address the buildings long-term deferred maintenance and the value and contribution this property has to our state's architectural and cultural heritage.

It is the cornerstone of the Department of Forestry's Headquarters Campus in Salem, Oregon and represents the best design and highest degree of historical integrity among the facilities constructed by the Department. Designed by U.S. Forest Service architect Linn A. Forrest, (who also designed the historic Timberline Lodge), the building was constructed under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to house the Department following the Capitol Building fire April 1935.

An August 1939 Oregonian article dubbed the building a **"Symphony in Oregon Woods,"** explaining that the new structure featured "nearly every variety of timber growing in Oregon." Native Oregon hardwoods and conifers were used to finish the ceilings, walls and floors, with each room featuring a distinct wood or combination of woods. The interior of the building is as much a work of art as the exterior. The exterior of the State Forester's Office Building includes the use of random-coursed masonry cladding and hand-hewn timber framing to emphasize the structure's rusticity. Many works of the building's craftsmanship extend into the cultural landscape with stone walls and pathways that create outdoor rooms and are mimicked in a stone retaining wall along the creek.



(Images Courtesy: Historic American Buildings Survey)

In 1982, the State Forester's Office Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As stated in the nomination, the building "meets the criterion of exceptional significance as the outstanding example of Depression era facilities in the National Park Style on State Forest land. It is among the three or four outstanding examples of the National Park Style in the state. **It ranks second only to Timberline Lodge** on Mt. Hood, which is the highest expression of the National Park Style in Oregon."

The State Forester's Office Building is a very significant place and cultural resource for Oregon. It is of paramount importance to invest in its full restoration and rehabilitation now. It's been over a decade since ODF developed a Preservation Plan in 2014 and has kept updating those plans for today's capital needs. It is time for this priority project to be completed. **Restore Oregon urges support for full funding.** ODF can fully utilize it again for department staff and operations and the project will not only increase its disaster resiliency but help the State reduce its carbon footprint through its retention and reuse. **It is time to bring the "Symphony in Oregon Woods" back in harmony and vitality for the next 100 years.** Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nicole Possert".

Nicole Possert
Executive Director