

February 13, 2026

Senate Committee on Rules

Testimony in support of Kacey KC to serve as Oregon State Forester

Submitted by: Pete Caligiuri, Forest Strategy Director

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Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Oregon, I'm pleased to write in support of the confirmation of Kacey KC as Oregon's next State Forester and the first woman to serve permanently in that role in the agency's history.

TNC is a science-based, non-partisan organization, with over 80,000 supporters in Oregon alone, committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our staff, comprised of scientists, land stewards, and fire managers based in communities across the state, collaborate with a wide range of local, state, federal, tribal, academic, and NGO partners to advance dry forest restoration efforts that increase landscape resilience, reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire, and sustain the many benefits that healthy ecosystems provide to nature and people. This work is critical as our forests face the threat of increasingly severe and uncharacteristic drought, wildfires, insects, and pathogens.

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is a key partner in this work and strong leadership from the next State Forester is essential as ODF evolves in response to the many challenges ahead. Not only do we need someone with strong executive management experience to oversee the agency's current core functions (i.e., wildfire suppression, State Forest management, Forest Practices Act administration, small forestland owner assistance, etc.), we also need someone who can provide strong vision, direction and leadership, who can create a culture that empowers all staff, and who holds the agency accountable as it leans further into the new and emerging priorities that are essential to address what lies ahead. Those include:

- **Elevation of Landscape Resilience:** From re-focusing effort and investment to fully complete and implement the 20-Year Landscape Resiliency Strategy, collaborating with the Governor's Office and sister agencies to own and act boldly to meet the objectives of EO 25-26, supporting a strong Federal Forest Restoration Program that supports holistic, science-based forest restoration, and demonstrating the value and importance of the state's investment in the Landscape Resilience Fund, there is a clear opportunity and need for ODF to grow into one of the leading landscape resilience agencies in the West.
- **Implementation of the ODF Climate Change and Carbon Plan:** From fully implementing to CCCP (approved by the Board of Forestry in 2021) to collaborating with ODOE and the Natural Climate Solutions Team to identify and prioritize NCS practices in Oregon's forests that sequester and store carbon, stabilize carbon stores in disturbance-prone landscapes, enhance ecosystem resilience, and benefit public health and communities, ODF must work with its sister agencies to develop, track, and support strategies that advance sustainable land management, conservation, and restoration activities.

- **Completion of the Private Forest Accord HCP:** Full implementation and federal approval of the Private Forest Accord HCP by December 2027 is essential to ensure the durability of the improved riparian protections and increased regulatory certainty of the negotiated agreement.

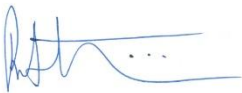
Kacey KC's experience and leadership with the Nevada Division of Forestry demonstrates she possesses the key skills to be successful leading ODF into the future.

- She has strong fire management experience, including working through the complex financial management and accounting challenges associated with rising wildfire suppression costs in the West.
- She brings strong connections and leadership experience with regional to national-scale forest and fire management organizations, including the National Association of State Foresters, the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, and the Council of Western State Foresters.
- She has experience leading organizational change within the Nevada Division of Forestry.
- She has demonstrated success working through complex natural resources challenges, listening to diverse perspectives and voices, balancing interests and addressing impacts to ecosystems, natural resources, Tribes, and local communities.
- She brings significant knowledge and experience working in rangeland systems, which while not a direct responsibility of the State Forester in Oregon, is nonetheless an asset as ODF engages statewide in landscape resilience, wildfire management, etc.

In summary, we believe that Kacey KC has proven herself to be an effective and inclusive leader in the state of Nevada. We are hopeful that she will bring this leadership and a fresh set of eyes to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for ODF and the State of Oregon. And we look forward to continuing to work with ODF as we lean into the new and emerging priorities that are essential to achieving landscape resilience goals in this era of shared stewardship.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and of Kacey KC as Oregon's next State Forester.

Respectfully,



Pete Caligiuri  
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The Nature Conservancy, Oregon