



**SOTIA**  
Southern Oregon Timber  
Industries Association

For Immediate Release  
April 24, 2013

Contact: Tom Partin 503-222-9505  
Jim Geisinger 503-364-1330  
Bob Ragon 541-672-0757  
Dave Schott 541-773-5329

### **Forest Industry Urges Comprehensive Solution for Federal Forests Requests that Wilderness Legislation Not Advance Separately**

A group of forest products industry associations today sent a [letter](#) to Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley urging enactment of a meaningful legislative resolution to the paralysis affecting federal forest management in Western Oregon.

The [American Forest Resource Council](#), [Associated Oregon Loggers](#), [Douglas Timber Operators](#) and Southern Oregon Timber Industries Association sent the letter in advance of a hearing of the Public Lands Subcommittee of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee scheduled for April 25, 2013 to consider a number of public lands bills. Among them is the “Oregon Treasures Act of 2013” ([S.353](#)) which includes the proposed Wild Rogue Wilderness and Molalla Wild and Scenic Rivers designations. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is chaired by Senator Wyden.

“Our industry is opposed to the passage of these proposals, as well as other Wilderness areas proposed for Western Oregon, unless they are coupled with, or preceded by, the enactment of a meaningful legislative resolution to the paralysis affecting federal forest management in Western Oregon,” the letter states.

The letter notes last week’s [closing of Rough & Ready Lumber Company](#), the last sawmill in [Josephine County](#), where [the unemployment rate is 11.6 percent](#) and [the average poverty level is 17.8 percent](#). The mill closed for lack of timber supply from nearby federal forests managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM managed Oregon and California Railroad Grant Lands (O&C Lands) grow over 1.5 billion board feet to timber per year, but recent timber sale levels have been well below 200 million board feet. In fact, in 2011, the total timber volume awarded by the BLM was only 137 million board feet. Harvesting on Forest Service lands remains well below the drastically reduced levels called for in the Northwest Forest Plan.

“This very real crisis, not additional Wilderness designations, should be a priority issue for the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,” say the letter’s authors.

The letter references a [March 19, 2013 opinion piece in the Oregonian](#) in which Senator Wyden wrote, “with cooperation from stakeholders on all sides we will have a solution that works for all of Oregon” and “that solution must increase timber harvests and economic activity on some lands while permanently conserving others.”

The letter concludes by expressing the hope that Oregon’s Senators will join Oregon delegation members Representatives Peter DeFazio, Greg Walden and Kurt Schrader and Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber in their efforts “to find a true, lasting solution for Oregon’s federal forests and rural communities.” The [O&C Trust, Conservation and Jobs Act](#), a draft bill supported by the majority of Oregon’s House delegation, contains provisions for both forest management to produce jobs and revenue for counties and for permanent conservation of areas included in S. 353.