



February 26, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
1124 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murkowski and McCollum, Ranking Member Udall and Joyce:

We are writing to ask for your support to honor the Federal government's statutory obligation to manage approximately two million acres of Oregon & California (O&C) Lands for sustained yield timber production and to support essential services in 18 Western Oregon counties. Specifically, we are requesting a Fiscal Year 2020 funding level of \$111 million for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Western Oregon Resource Management program, which would allow the agency to sell at least 278 million board feet (mmbf) of timber – the level outlined in the 2016 Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for Western Oregon.

The health and vitality of these federal forests, county governments, communities, and the local forest products infrastructure is heavily depended on the BLM's ability maintain and increase timber harvests. We respectfully ask that you provide the funding and direction needed for the statutorily unique O&C Lands in Western Oregon. Both are crucial to Oregon's rural counties, the state's economy, and the members of our organizations, which represent the engine of Oregon's \$12.7 billion, 76,000 employee forest products sector.

Increase the Funding level for the BLM Western Oregon Resource Management Program to at least \$111 million in FY20.

Funding for the BLM Western Resource Management Program supports timber harvesting activities across more than two million acres of O&C Lands. The O&C Act of 1937 *requires* (non-discretionary) that the O&C lands be managed for ongoing, sustained-yield timber production to generate shared revenues for essential county services like sheriff patrols, libraries, mental health services, jails, and road

maintenance, as well as raw materials for local industry. No other federal forestlands in the country are managed under this type of mandate.

Beginning in the 1990's, O&C harvest levels fell to less than 200 million board feet (mmbf) – approximately 15 percent of the annual sustained growth. The lack of sustainable harvests has had a profound impact on the health of these forests and local communities, the timber infrastructure, and the county governments that rely on shared timber receipts to fund essential services. While multiple factors contributed to the harvest reductions, there is a direct correlation between the BLM's available funding and the amount of timber the agency can offer for sale. The BLM Western Oregon account has been reduced from \$114.5 million in FY14 to \$106.9 million in recent years.

The BLM can achieve a 278 mmbf timber sale program with adequate funding and focus. This increased harvest level would create 1,130 more private sector jobs over last year and generate an estimated \$42 million for essential public services in Western Oregon through shared timber receipts *and* \$42 million for the U.S. Treasury. This is a true win-win and would also make progress towards meeting the BLM's statutory obligation to manage all suitable O&C Lands for sustained-yield timber harvests and improve the health of hundreds of thousands of acres of overstocked, fire-prone Federal forests.

Require the BLM to report timber outputs in volume sold and awarded, rather than volume offered.

The House included FY18 Appropriations Bill Report language directing the BLM to report its timber sale accomplishments for sales that have been sold and awarded, rather than merely offered for sale. We believe this language was an important first step towards greater accountability and bringing the BLM in line with the Forest Service, which only counts sold timber sales towards its accomplishments. Unfortunately, the BLM has not followed this direction. In fact, the BLM had a FY18 timber volume target of 216 mmbf, but only sold 175 million board feet. The actual volume awarded was even less due to extensive delays caused by administrative protests. The BLM will be proposing changes to streamline the administrative protest process, but we believe the Committee should hold the agency accountable for this important reporting requirement.

Communities across Western Oregon, and the forest products manufacturing infrastructure that supports these communities, are hopeful that the BLM will deliver on 278 mmbf in timber harvests in FY19 and FY20. This would greatly benefit the economic vitality of these communities and deliver on the Federal government's statutory obligation to manage these lands for timber production.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Forest Resource Council
Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.
Douglas Timber Operators
Southern Oregon Timber Industries Association

cc: Oregon Congressional Delegation