



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

Date: January 9, 2025

To: [Board of Forestry](#)

Re: Jan. 9—Agenda Item 14—Comments on **Climate Change and Carbon Plan Implementation**

Chair Kelly and Members of the Board of Forestry,

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) bases our comments on this National League position: *“The League supports climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best-available climate science to ensure a stable climate system for future generations.”* Furthermore, the League believes that *“a full accounting of all costs, including cumulative ecological impacts of timber harvests and other forest uses must be considered in forest activity decisions.”* This position is very much in alignment with the Board of forestry’s definition of sustainable forest management: *“Forest resources across the landscape are used, developed, and protected at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current environmental, economic, and social needs, and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs [based on Oregon Revised Statute 184.421]”*.

LWVOR continues to support the state Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Forest Management Plan (FMP), the **Private Forest Accord**, and the **Climate Change and Carbon Plan (CCCP)**. One of the barriers to success listed is the 2021 CCCP is *“limited staffing capacity.”*

As part of the implementation of the CCCP, the legislature passed The **Natural Working Lands Fund** in 2023. The purpose of ODF’s \$3.25 million portion of this \$10 million Fund is “to provide financial incentives to (disadvantaged) small forest owners to implement climate-smart forestry practices on their own.” The program will provide a mechanism (local place-based organizations) to incentivize landowners to consider climate change and take management action they may otherwise not consider or be unable to realize.” ODF’s recommendations for spending its share of the Fund is to:

1. Advance implementation of Climate-Smart Forestry as outlined in ODF’s **Climate Change and Carbon Plan: \$1.5 million**
2. Incentivize Climate Smart Forestry Implementation in partnership with Tribal and Environmental Justice Communities **\$1 million**
3. Establishment of climate-ready seed orchards to support small, disadvantaged, and tribal forestry: **\$750,000.**

The excellent update of **Vision for Oregon’s Forests** (Item E on the consent agenda) states as one its top five goals: “the Board and Department will build capacity for climate-smart leadership.”

Currently there are two ODF staff doing great work on climate issues for ODF: John Tokarczyk (Resource Planning Manager) presenting on the CCCP update (Item 14 not included as of this writing), and Danny Norlander (Forestry Climate, Carbon, and Health Analyst), both of whom have many other duties besides climate issues, but there is no one person in charge and accountable for meeting future carbon storage performance measures.*

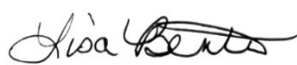
LWVOR supports funding a climate coordinator position for implementing the ODF Natural Working Lands Fund. *All the other NWL Fund recipient agencies except ODF, i.e., OWEB, ODA, and ODFW, are using fund money to pay for their coordinator positions.* We think ODF needs to direct its share of the existing unspent NWL Fund to pay for a climate coordinator position, rather than for incentives for individual forest owners which would have less climate impact. Since climate-smart forestry practices, such as longer harvest rotations and protecting older trees for habitat and carbon storage on private forestlands are still ill-defined, and existing grants for “climate smart practices” do not currently exist at the local level, the funds cannot be easily allocated. **We believe these funds should be redirected to fund a climate coordinator position.**

LWVOR will also request funds for a climate director position in the 2025-27 budget; someone who has the leadership qualities and the authority to direct policy and implementation of the CCCP across the state and across all ODF divisions. In general, ODF has many high-level goals and aspirational documents but very few practical, actional guidelines or practices that are needed *now* to prioritize or help inform forestry decisions on the ground.

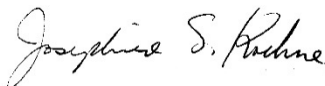
The clock is ticking and Oregon forests have the greatest potential in the world to draw down atmospheric carbon *worldwide* to slow climate change with its extremely costly damages. The ODF Board and the ODF agency need to take greater responsibility and use its authority to see that actionable forest policies are put in place, such as revisions to the Forest Practices Act, to decrease GHG emissions to ensure Oregon does its part to address the climate crisis. We urge you to put the best people in place to take ownership and set climate direction across the entire agency.

We ask that you consider these comments and address the gap in staffing by hiring a climate coordinator using current NWL Funds. We also support using any new NWL funds to continue this position.

Thank you for your service and consideration of this proposal.



Lisa Bentson
President LWVOR



Josie Koehne
Forestry Advocate LWVOR



Claudia Keith
Climate Emergency Coordinator

Cc: [Oregon Climate Action Commission](#)
Governor Staff: Senior Natural Resources Advisor, [Geoffrey Huntington](#)
Natural Resources and Climate Policy Advisor, [Karin Power](#)

* Carbon storage targets are yet to be set in the Adaptive Management Plan ([Appendix 3, Table 3](#)) for the department’s share of its obligation to reduce GHG emissions by increasing carbon sequestration and storage on public and state forestlands statewide. The Oregon’s forest carbon baseline will be established by new forest plot data in the upcoming Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) report and various forest management strategies will be modeled soon to inform state forest management decision-making for the state HCP.