



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 102-year-old 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.

December 12, 2022

To: The Honorable Governor Kate Brown  
The Honorable Secretary of State Shemia Fagan  
The Honorable State Treasurer Tobias Read  
[landboard.testimony@dsl.oregon.gov](mailto:landboard.testimony@dsl.oregon.gov)

Re: **Elliott State Research Forest Celebration with more work to do**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that natural resources such as forests, and the animals and plants living within them, should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. We have positions in support of Parks and Water Quality as well as positions on Forestry that apply to this issue. Additionally, we support a stable state system for financing public schools. **Our members have been actively involved in assuring that this very special Oregon treasure, the Elliott State Forest, is maintained in public hands.**

**In 2015**, we said: *The best transition scenario, and the best management strategy, decouples old-growth clearcutting from school funding, protects the Elliott's remaining native forests, wild salmon and imperiled wildlife, safeguards the Elliott drinking water, public recreational and educational opportunities, and promotes timber jobs by restoratively thinning the second-growth tree farms.*

We supported the \$100 million in bonding to help “buy” assets not otherwise protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and any Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). **We support continuation of the HCP**—an HCP that can be upheld in court and that protects Oregon’s iconic salmon, northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet and others as they are recognized as attempting to survive—even thrive—in this forest.

**In December of 2019**, we expressed appreciation for the work of the Advisory Committee and the Draft Set of Principles developed by the Committee. Those Principles have been included in **SB 1546** (2022) as foundational to the formation of this new proposed public Authority.

**In December of 2020**, we shared with the State Land Board our opinion that the final issues to be resolved were Governance and Finance. We have followed the work of the Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF) Advisory Committee as they worked with Oregon State University (OSU) and the Dept. of State Lands (DSL) since the December 2020 decision of the State Land Board. We believe that the Governance issue was addressed in **SB 1546** and is also being addressed today.

**In February of 2022**, we supported **SB 1546 Enrolled** that established the Elliott State Research Forest and provided funds to decouple the Forest from the Common School Fund. The bill additionally established the Elliott State Research Forest Authority with sideboards with the expectation that OSU will take on the research and management of the Forest under contract with the Authority. While the bill requirements need to be completed and today is one of those

steps, the bill provides clear guidance for the new Authority. **We appreciate the volunteers who may be appointed to that Authority today.**

**As for Finance, we continue to have concerns**, although OSU believes they can manage the research on the forest while not over-harvesting beyond what is in the draft Forest Management Plan. OSU and the yet to be adopted FMP and HCP will clearly guide any harvest. It is critical that the new management (the Authority) keeps a close eye on the revenue and expenses. Balancing the harvest revenues and other grant funding with doing the proposed research, providing recreational and educational opportunities and on-going management of the Forest is a big charge.

**We want to recognize the incredible work by the members of the Elliott Forest Advisory Committee and the staff at OSU and DSL** who have provided numerous public outreach efforts and listened to that input these past years. Mostly, we want to thank **the Land Board members** for your tireless effort to find a public ownership solution for this iconic Forest. Governor Brown and Treasurer Read have been here since the inception of this journey. **Thank you.** We hope that Director Walker can someday soon take a walk in the Forest with her grandchildren and remember her teenage years when playing in the river and creeks was a summer pastime. And we look forward to other Oregonians joining her in that journey.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for your decisions.



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