



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

LINDSAY BERSCHAUER • KIT JOHNSTON • MARY STARRETT

535 NE Fifth Street • McMinnville, OR 97128-4523
(503) 434-7501 • Fax (503) 434-7553
TTY (800) 735-290 • www.co.yamhill.or.us

February 1, 2024

Oregon Board of Forestry
Attn: State Forester Cal Mukumoto
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310
Submitted via email: forestryinformation@odf.oregon.gov

Approved by the Yamhill County Board of
Commissioners on 02/01/2024
via Board Order 24-025

RE: Testimony regarding Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan

Dear Mr. Mukumoto:

Thank you for your service to the residents of the State of Oregon. As you experienced while attending the Association of Oregon Counties district meetings last year, we are very passionate about strengthening our natural resource communities and protecting the associated industries from harmful, extreme public policy changes.

Yamhill County stands with neighboring county leaders in an urgent call for reconsideration of the HCP. It is difficult to imagine the damage a potential 34% decrease in harvest levels would equate to in timber-dependent counties but if the 1990's are any indication, working families, schools and critical public services will be devastated. These impacts won't simply stay contained to these timber counties. We are already seeing the anticipation of a severe HCP play out statewide in every conversation we have regarding statewide policy, county budgets, unfunded mandates from the State and local strain on resources.

As you are likely aware, Hampton Lumber recently announced the closure of their mill in Banks, Oregon. Hampton Lumber is a company with deep roots in Yamhill County, and we cherish them not only as a major employer but also as a charitable entity that contributes tens of thousands of dollars each year to helping our most vulnerable. Recently, we partnered with Hampton on an agreement that will allow them to modernize their Willamina plant, increase efficiencies, and ensure they stay competitive in a global market. As part of that agreement, Hampton committed to investing in local districts by contributing to a community service fund, a special projects fund for the West Valley of Yamhill County and paying for equipment for the local fire department. This proactive engagement within our county is why we continue to be eager partners with natural resource companies. A destructive HCP undermines the financial ability of timber companies to be good stewards of the community.

We respectfully request that you consider the humanity of rural Oregon and the impacted forest trust land counties. We've been down this road before, and the consequences of those decisions have impacted generations of Oregonians.

ODF has a legal mandate to manage these forests for the Greatest Permanent Value, and the current HCP far exceeds your conservation requirements. For the good of all of Oregon, please consider the mistakes of the past and seek to responsibly balance protection of wildlife habitat with critical funding for rural communities.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Berschauer
Chair

Kit Johnston
Vice-Chair

Mary Starrett
Commissioner