OR930 Dick Prather

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ROSEBURG AREA Chamber of Commerce

September 25, 2007

Mr. Edward W. Shepard
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Western Oregon Plan Revisions Office
P. O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208

Re: Draft EIS for Western Oregon Plan Revision
Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce Endorsement of Alternative #2

Dear Mr. Shepard:

Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of its 750 members and the more than 18,000 employees represented by those member businesses and organizations, endorses Alternative #2 of the BLM's DEIS for WOPR. The Roseburg Area Chamber board of directors voted unanimously to support Alternative #2 based on the following:

- Many Oregon counties, in particular Douglas County, once depended on shared revenue generated from timber harvests on public lands to fund many basic services. This revenue all but disappeared in the 1990's as management practices on public lands changed dramatically.

- Safety net funding under the Secure Rural Schools Act will ultimately expire without extension, leaving Douglas County without financial certainty and necessitating cuts in basic services, limiting public safety activity, lay off employees and many other potential reductions.

- Implementing effective, consistent and sustainable forest management on BLM and other public lands will not only facilitate the stabilization of county funding, but is critical to the growth and sustainability of our timber industry and provide a needed boost to the local economy.

- Of the alternatives presented in the BLM's DEIS, the Chamber believes Alternative #2 is the best management approach to the immediate needs of Douglas County and other timber-dependent communities. The Chamber feels that Alternative #2 achieves many important goals, while only managing 48% of BLM lands for harvest (an increase from the only 25% currently being managed for harvest). The Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce supports Alternative #2 because it:

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- Calls for an estimated annual harvest of 727 million board feet;
- Generates $108 million to help fund Oregon's O&C counties, which is 94% of the revenue counties received under the current county payments program. For Douglas County this translates into $27 million, or 94% of the $28.7 million currently received in BLM-Secure Rural Schools Act payments;
- Creates nearly 3,500 new jobs;
- Allows for long-term sustainable management for timber harvest and production; and
- Maintains environmental protections such as immediate replanting, buffer zones around rivers and streams to protect fish, restrictions on herbicide and pesticide use as well as protection of wildlife habitats and threatened and endangered species.

The Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce would like to emphasize that it supports Alternative #2 harvest projections **at a minimum** and encourages the BLM to continue to assess the management plan and the potential to increase the number of acres managed for timber production for optimal county funding and local economic health, while ensuring necessary environmental protections remain in place.

Additionally, the Roseburg Area Chamber is also of the opinion that all BLM administered land should be managed to minimize the threat of catastrophic wildfire on those lands and surrounding state and private lands.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and for BLM's efforts to improve the management practices on public lands in Western Oregon.

Best regards,

ROSEBURG AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Debra L. Fromdahl
Executive Director

cc: Jay Carlson, BLM–Roseburg