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Representative Peter DeFazio
405 E. 8th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401

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September 26, 2007

Dear Representative DeFazio,

I would like to thank you for your excellent work representing Oregonians in Washington, D.C. and your dedication to pursuing progressive legislation in the current Congressional climate.

I'm writing to express my disagreement with the Bureau of Land Management's Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR), a 1600 page document that includes 3 major alternatives, all of which would significantly increase clear-cutting of federal old-growth forests. WOPR's Alternative 2 is the BLM's stated preference, largely because it would bring the most revenue to our cash-strapped counties. When I called the BLM in Portland to ask why all 3 alternatives rely on clear-cutting ("regeneration harvesting"), I was told that the sub-alternative to Alternative 1 relies on thinning rather than clear-cutting. This sub-alternative would thin all possible stands of younger trees over the next 9-12 years, leaving older stands of trees untouched. This is the only plan that I can support.

I think it's shortsighted to use the 80-year old O & C legislation to plan for the next 100 years of BLM timber cutting, as the WOPR does; the O & C was enacted long before scientists understood the role of forests in countering carbon emissions and climate change. I think Alternative 1's sub-alternative would provide forest jobs, income to counties, and protection for federal old-growth forests while western states work with Congress to solve the funding problems for counties with high proportions of untaxed federal land. Neither federal timber payments nor the Secure Rural Schools legislation have provided sustainable income for western counties in recent years, so I support finding a different approach that does not pit the last remaining stands of ancient trees against the need for county services such as pothole paving, drug rehabilitation, or rural sheriff patrols.

I also spoke with the BLM office in Eugene about WOPR's claim that Alternative 2 would contribute to the recovery of species (WOPR, Volume 1, page 65). When I asked how clear-cutting will improve habitat for endangered species, I was told that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is still working on its Recovery plan, which BLM will use to determine recovery habitat. If the Fish and Wildlife Recovery plan has not yet determined that species recovery can occur under WOPR's clear-cutting provisions, then I believe the WOPR is making false statements.

Another issue at stake in the WOPR is the connectivity corridor that links the Coast Range with the Cascades at the very southern end of the Willamette Valley where I live. If BLM clear-cuts much of its checker-board old-growth holdings here, and private landowners have no restrictions on cutting old-growth, then there will be no protection of the corridor that allows species to travel throughout western Oregon. This corridor is not present in the WOPR's index at all, and both BLM representatives that I spoke with mentioned that this is an area of scientific weakness in the WOPR documentation.

I'm hoping that you will work with other members of Congress to eliminate or improve the outdated O & C law and examine or create sustainable long-term funding solutions for western counties. I also encourage you to remind the BLM that the O & C legislation does not mandate clear-cutting as the WOPR proposes. Thinning younger federal forests, as in Alternative 1's sub-alternative, is a reasonable plan in a reasonable time frame, given that science and politics are changing all the time!

Thank you again for your attention to the needs of Oregonians.

Sincerely,



Leslie Rubinstein
79296 Replsleger Road
Cottage Grove, OR 97424

cc: Bureau of Lane Management, WOPR, POB 2965, Portland, OR 97208