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820 Hillside Ave
Klamath Falls, OR 97601
October 30, 2007

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

Dear Mr. Shepard:

I am a professional forester and have worked in southern Oregon and northeast California for 38 years. I strongly support your selection of Alternative Two from the array of four alternatives presented in your Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management Districts.

I appreciate your extensive social-economic analysis and wish to comment on the economic impact of federal forest management decisions.

Historically, the western Oregon counties, including the O&C Counties, derived a large percentage of their economic well-being from the wood products industry. That is what we do here. The temperate forests of Oregon are among the most productive in the world and still have the potential to provide large volumes of commercial wood to meet local, regional and world wood needs. At present, federal forests support nearly half of the nation's standing softwood inventory but supply less than two percent of the nation's wood needs. The "wood famine" predicted at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries has not occurred, nor is it likely to. Globally, there is plenty of wood. The United States has found it easy to satisfy its wood needs from non-federal domestic forests and, increasingly, from foreign sources. About a third of our softwood use is now sourced from outside the country.

Your proposed alternative would be a small but very positive step in a return to U.S. wood self-sufficiency while at the same time securing economic stability for the large part of rural Oregon that is uniquely situated to produce high value wood products.

The BLM manages 16% of the sawtimber in western Oregon and as recently as the 1970s supplied a similar fraction of the area's timber harvest. That harvest has now fallen to just over three percent of the total harvest from the western Oregon planning area, with predictable effects on local economies. The Secure Rural Schools Act funded the timber-dependant counties on an interim basis but the rest of the nation hasn't, nor should it have, the patience to continue to fund rural western counties within whose boundaries exists the huge wealth of the federal forests, including the O&C lands.

I strongly support a resumption of intelligent, productive timber management and production on all of the federal forestlands and certainly on those administered by the BLM in western Oregon. I also encourage wood production on a far larger portion than the 48% land use allocation under Alternative Two. Regeneration cutting should be prescribed only on those forest types that require such management and a more diameter-diverse regime prescribed elsewhere, and outside the 48% allocated to timber management, to maintain visual values, habitat for the largest number of native species and to produce the most fire resistant landscape possible. I believe the broad range of forest management objectives could be met with a long rotation, gentle forest management regime that mimics natural processes as closely as rational economics permit. The value of all services produced must cover the costs of their production.

I very much appreciate that the BLM has not used nor has it proposed artificial diameter-limit cutting and can remove trees of all values across the diameter spectrum to meet the needs of the forest and economic realities as well. It's time to do much more of that.

I believe that the American people, and Oregonians in particular, would be displeased if they were fully aware of the asset value of the federal forests and the actual economic return they provide the taxpayers. Currently, the economic return from the federal lands is negative. Costs exceed returns as the counties in which the federal lands lie curtail or eliminate services to their citizens while the huge value of potential federal timber production and sale remains generally untapped. It didn't used to be this way and doesn't need to be now or in the future. We are approaching a time when the rest of the planet will tire of the U.S. sitting on its timber wealth while other nations supply our needs.

Absent a sustained and productive timber management and sale program on the O&C and other western Oregon BLM lands, I strongly encourage sale of at least half of the O&C lands to the private sector as described in the proposed National Forest and Schools Stabilization Act written by the boards of commissioners of the Oregon O&C counties and published on December 8, 2006.

I urge you to resist the rhetoric of those who find any commercial use of public land and the cutting of any relatively large or "old" tree unacceptable.

I very much appreciate this opportunity to comment on the DEIS and request that my remarks be included in your comment record.

Very truly yours,

Craig B. Ditman

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