



STATE LAND BOARD

Shemia Fagan
Secretary of State

Kate Brown
Governor

Tobias Read
State Treasurer

January 31, 2022

Re: State Land Board Supports Senate Bill 1546-1, Establishing a Public Elliott State Research Forest

Honorable members of the Oregon Legislature,

The members of the State Land Board are united in support of Senate Bill 1546-1, which will establish the Elliott State Research Authority, a public agency to oversee the Elliott State Research Forest in coordination with Oregon State University.

Since 1859, the State Land Board has overseen the lands provided to Oregon at statehood for use of schools. Oregonians have many different views on how school lands should be managed and the State Land Board's responsibilities as the trustee of those lands and the Common School Fund.

Nowhere have these differences been more evident than in the decade-long effort to find a future for the Elliott State Forest. For years, every potential path ended at a roadblock, with Oregon unable to resolve the tension between the forest's historical role of helping fund schools and the forest's potential to provide public benefits beyond harvest.

After hearing extensively from the public, our current vision for the future of the Elliott took shape: a public forest that has fulfilled its obligation to funding Oregon schools, with a habitat conservation plan that protects species and allows for harvest, and opportunities for recreation, education – and scientific research that will benefit forest management policy and practices long into Oregon's future.

In 2018, we asked the Department of State Lands and Oregon State University to collaboratively explore a research forest with stakeholders, Tribes, and the public. The Elliott State Research Forest Advisory Committee, a 15-member group with perspectives on conservation, timber, schools, recreation, local government, and more, has collectively put in thousands of hours to help shape the research forest and this legislation.

Throughout this work, people with very different views came together to explore, develop and ultimately endorse a research forest as the right path – a path that realizes the State Land Board's vision for the Elliott.

SB 1546-1 is essential to the Elliott's future as a research forest. This legislation will forever keep the research forest public, establishing an independent public agency governed by a board of directors with the expertise needed to ensure a research forest truly contributes to conservation, economic growth, recreation, and education, as well as supporting research on topics of critical importance, such as forestry's role in addressing climate change. Most importantly, this legislation will ensure the forest is governed with the transparency and accountability Oregonians expect from their state government.

We want to acknowledge and applaud the ongoing work of the Advisory Committee. Their work continues to demonstrate the power and potential of collaboration to bridge differences and find consensus.

The research forest proposal and SB 1546-1 are the best next steps Oregon can take to bring a contentious chapter to a close and create a sustainable future for the Elliott. Please join us in supporting Senate Bill 1546-1.



Governor Kate Brown



Secretary of State Shemia Fagan



Treasurer Tobias Read