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Steve Hobbs, Chair, Members of The Federal Forestland Advisory Committee and Facilitator Robert Fisher:

Rural Oregon and Federal Forestlands

The meeting agenda requests specific comments related to water quality, quantity and related management challenges. We are pleased to respond to federal forestland management challenges, in general.

Various natural processes are occurring ⁱⁿ federal forests regularly whether there is forest management activity or not. High risk areas must be designated as such and addressed. There are sufficient environmental laws and regulations in place to protect against known disturbances affecting water quality and quantity in federal forests.

Item #2 of "Most Pressing Problems" is very important because it deals with the economic livelihood of a majority of Oregonians, particularly in rural communities. Reduced timber harvest from federal forestlands has caused loss of industry infrastructure and unintended hardships that appear to be getting more acute. We have addressed this problem several times with you in the past year.

The topic of preserving older forests, particularly on federal forestlands, has been researched and discussed at length in the past 25 or so years. The practice of setting aside individual trees of a certain diameter size points to individual tree management which, over time, creates a number of new problems in Douglas Fir forestland management whether it be on federal or private lands. In addition, our citizens demand and use timbers and normal lumber products that can be manufactured only from quality logs of larger diameter.

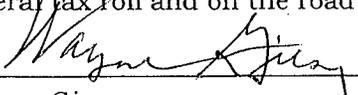
Some recent research developments indicate certain wildlife species may not require or be saved from extinction by the presence of old growth stands. There are considerable older forests in federal ownerships including wilderness lands, parks and other forest land areas not subject to timber harvest plus streamside buffer strips on federal and private lands.

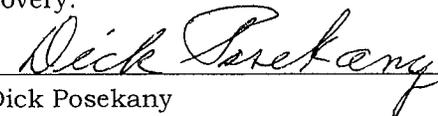
The practice of "thinning" trees at early age which reduces crowding and removes defective trees is an important silvicultural tool in most timber stands. However, the final harvest cut, especially in species like Douglas Fir and other shade intolerant species, must have complete tree removal for best management results which include the provision of desirable wildlife habitat.

Combining Item #4 & #5 of "Most Pressing Problems", proper forest management is a long-term issue and full-funding for federal timber management must be provided. Since federal lands comprise 57% of Oregon's total forest lands, the greatest economic assistance to rural Oregon is provided by utilization of the federal timber resource.

A number of laws and regulations have been created by Congress governing federal forestland management which have conflicting purposes. In order to provide a clear, concise federal forest management plan, the current battery of laws and resulting regulations must be reconciled.

The Federal Forestland Advisory Committee was created for the express purpose of utilizing the federal timber resource that should provide economic benefits to County governments, schools, roads and citizens. Immediate action is important! Providing for the sale and harvest of Federal Timber will get Oregon off the federal tax roll and on the road of rural economic recovery.


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cc: Gov. Kulongowski