



# Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

*Conservators of the Peace*

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Oregon Board of Forestry  
Salem Headquarters  
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Members of the Board of Forestry:

The Oregon State Sheriffs' Association (OSSA) was formed in 1916 and for the past 100 years we've worked diligently with sheriffs across Oregon to provide for the safety of the public in all of Oregon's 36 counties.

In recent years, many of our members, particularly those in rural counties, have faced unprecedented budget challenges as the federal and state economy contracted and as traditional industries that provided the lion's share of the jobs and tax base in those rural communities downsized or disappeared.

Our members care deeply about the safety of our citizens, but are constrained by the funding available to protect the public. Due to funding shortfall, many sheriffs were forced into drastic actions like prisoner releases and eliminating key deputy positions that left our offices undermanned and county populations without adequate public safety coverage.

Despite the improving economy, many sheriff offices remain in dire straits and face a constant struggle to find the funds to provide base level services for their county. This holds especially true for timber counties as that industry continues to be impacted by challenges on federal and state forests and those jobs have not come back.

On the matter of state forests, OSSA encourages the Board of Forestry to adopt a management plan that will utilize the resource for the financial benefit of the forest trust land counties while also ensuring appropriate conservation measures that will ensure the sustainability and health of our forests for the future.

Currently, state forest harvests represent roughly half of annual growth. With greater levels of active management, like those proposed in the 70/30, the trust counties could collectively see a funding increase in the tens of millions dollars. Increased funding for the counties will put deputies back on patrol and help keep criminals behind bars. Ensuring adequate levels of public safety throughout our state is a goal all Oregonians can support.

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We appreciate that there are difficult decisions ahead of the Board of Forestry regarding the future of our state forests. As deliberations continue, we ask that you factor in the importance of state timber revenues to Oregon's Sheriff Offices and the communities that depend on the services that we provide.

An increase in active management can be achieved while also enhancing conservation outcomes and we ask that the Board of Forestry places a priority on an outcome that will give our Sheriff's the resources they need to protect Oregon counties.



Sheriff John Bishop (ret)  
Executive Director,  
Oregon State Sheriff's Association