Oregon
Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Forestry
State Forester's Office
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310-1336
503-945-7200
FAX 503-945-7212
www.oregon.gov/ODF

"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

February 19, 2016

This is an open letter to members of the Board of Forestry's statutorily established FTLAC and county commissioners who are engaged in the future of state-owned forest land.

In the weeks since receiving the Notice of Intent (NOI) to sue from Linn County, the Board of Forestry, Department of Forestry and Governor Brown's Office have been in very close coordination, including discussions with the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ). This has drawn and continues to draw field and staff resources away from the collaborative state forest management planning work, on which we had been engaged with you and all stakeholders. We're disappointed about this development, particularly at a time when we feel progress was underway, which we believe is just as important to you as it is to us.

We are aware some of you may be under the impression that DOJ has instructed us to not communicate with you. We want you to know that is not correct. We also want to be clear that we did not cancel and were not asked to cancel the FTLAC meeting on February 18th. Throughout the Board's work on state forests, we have been diligent about open engagement and communication with you, and we desire this kind of relationship.

This is not to say the NOI and potential next steps have no impact on how we work together and communicate. Due to the nature of legal processes, they do. Obviously, we can't discuss topics directly related to the NOI and legal theories. But the 70-plus year tradition of communication and interaction with you is important to us and there are practical matters associated with the state's ongoing forest management business that we can be talking about with you and your staff.

We know you have decisions to make in the weeks ahead. Some of you may have questions about whether a costly and drawn-out litigation pathway—which may further constrain our ability to interact and trigger more litigation from other sources—is the best way to address the challenges associated with state forest management. We share these questions. But we hope you won't conduct your decisions or interactions with us based on a non-existent "don't talk" order. We believe that a collaborative process that includes input from the FTLAC —rather than litigation—is in the best interest of all Oregonians who care about the future of these lands and the benefits they provide.

Sincerely,

Tom Imeson, Chair
Oregon Board of Forestry

Doug Decker
Oregon State Forester