

Submitted: 07/18/2019 3:26 PM

Subject: Accept necessary petition for Oregon coastal coho salmon

Dear Members Board of Forestry,

This letter is to urge you to accept the petition before the Board of Forestry relating to Oregon coastal coho salmon. This petition, if granted, would have serious benefits to rural Oregon's economy and the management of both public and private forest lands in Oregon.

There is no reliable data to prove that Coho populations in Oregon are increasing - the existing protections in place are working, but they are not enough. Additional regulations for the coho are absolutely necessary and would further support the practice of responsible forestry in our state.

While the Oregon Forest Practices Act has minor protections for coho habitat, including restrictions on road building, provisions for replacing stream culverts to increase coho spawning, and stream buffers for harvest, they are not enough to ensure the protection of this keystone species that is integral to the economy and identity of Oregon. The Board of Forestry passed new, much needed rules two years ago expanding stream buffers to protect salmon habitat. Those existing protections, combined with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) fisheries management and protections on agricultural lands, are part of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. That plan, which started in 1997, has contributed to an increasing coho population, bringing them back from the brink of collapse. But they are not out of the woods yet. The petition before the Board of Forestry is absolutely necessary.

Sincerely,

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