



Clatsop County

Board of Commissioners

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February 14, 2023

Oregon Board of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Board of Forestry,

Clatsop County supports the development of a Western Oregon State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The current version, however, raises a number of significant implications/concerns for our rural community, that include:

- Reducing local government revenues (with no viable path to replace locally);
- Reducing local government services and service levels, including first responders, schools, health care, public transportation and other vital government services;
- Eliminating family-wage timber jobs;
- Reducing activity and viability for other local businesses;
- Impacting the social fabric of our community, including schools, healthcare, not-for-profits and civic organizations.

The 2024-25 Implementation Plan (IP), released on February 2, 2023, reflects a reduction of harvest of nearly 35% from levels previously predicted by the Oregon Department of Forestry as part of the HCP development process. This IP confirms our worst fears and is further evidence this HCP process has not fairly and equitably balanced environmental, economic and social considerations. As the County most impacted by the IP – our concerns need to be heard and redressed.

[The recently released IP is the “worst case scenario” for taxing jurisdictions, businesses, schools and other social and civic structures in our community.](#)

[It will impact our community’s health and well-being for generations to come. We deserve better.](#)

Total Projected Impacts on Clatsop County Taxing Jurisdictions

35% reduction in annual timber revenues – with no (or limited) upward adjustments over time

County-wide taxing jurisdiction Annual Impacts based on 5-year average receipts (2016/17 to 2020/21):

Clatsop County	\$2,9999,000
Schools (K-12)	\$4,468,000
Community College	\$ 566,000
Clatsop Care Health District	\$ 227,000
Sunset Empire Transportation District	\$ 98,000
Port of Astoria	\$ 76,000
Rural Fire	\$ 33,000
Sunset Parks and Recreation District	\$ 12,000
City of Astoria	\$ 4,000
Total Annual Reduction	\$ 8,483,000

Clatsop County Financial Impacts Based on Recent ODF Projections

Clatsop County Annual Impacts based on 5-year average receipts (2016/17 to 2020/21):

County Taxing Jurisdiction	Annual Revenue Reduction Per Fund	As a % of Total Annual Revenues
Clatsop County Discretionary	\$1,813,000	8%
Rural Law Enforcement	\$ 434,000	15%
Road District #1	\$ 614,000	15%
State Land Enforcement – Sheriff	\$ 76,000	38%
Extension/4-H	\$ 32,000	7%
Fairgrounds	\$ 30,000	5%
Total Annual Reduction	\$2,999,000	

Summary of Potential Impacts by Service Area for Clatsop County:

Public Safety and Justice

Estimated annual impact - \$1,416,500

Discretionary Funding to Public Safety and Justice	\$906,500
Rural Law Enforcement	\$434,000
State Land Enforcement	\$ 76,000

The \$1,416,500 is equivalent to roughly 12.0 FTE (a reduction of nearly 10% from current staffing levels).

General Government

Estimated annual impact - \$906,500

Funds Assessment and Taxation, Clerks Office (Elections and Recording), Internal Services, Parks, Community Development and other General Fund departments.

The \$906,500 is equivalent to roughly 8.0 FTE (a reduction of nearly 10% from current staffing levels).

Public Works – Road Maintenance-

Estimated annual impact - \$614,000

Reduce funds available to maintain and repair roughly 232 miles of roadway, including bridges, culverts and other infrastructure. Pavement Condition Index will degrade over time; increasing costs of maintenance/repair.

Extension/4-H

Estimated annual impact \$32,000

Reduce funds available for programming and services related to administrative staff, operational expenses and program supplies.

Fairgrounds

Estimated annual impact - \$30,000

Reduce funds available for repair/maintenance of Fairgrounds property and facilities.

In Conclusion

Beyond the devastating financial impacts on local governments (an estimated \$8.5 million annual reduction), the County is also concerned about the broader economic and social implications of the HCP. According to the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, eleven (11) jobs are created in Oregon for every million board feet of timber harvested. It is also estimated for every \$1 million of

ODF timber revenue generated, an additional \$1.2 million is generated for local forest sector businesses who log, haul and mill the timber.

Rural communities need more family wage job creators – not less. Timber provides vital discretionary revenues to local governments **and** the industry supports a wide range of family-wage jobs, businesses and philanthropic activities.

Family-wage jobs are the cornerstone of a healthy and sustainable community. The HCP process must study and consider the impacts of job loss and government service reductions on our rural economy prior to approval. We urge the board to reflect on the fact that Clatsop County does not have the transportation system and developable lands (including industrial) that can make up for the loss of timber supported family-wage jobs. The state needs to examine all impacts of the HCP (environmental, economic and social) since its ramifications will impact this community for generations.

Decoupling local government financing from timber harvest (assuming the State agrees to offset local government revenue loss), will not ameliorate the impacts of reduced timber harvest on our local and regional economy.

Good public policy is founded on a broad consideration of interrelated and interdependent factors; the HCP must consider and balance this myriad of factors to produce a framework that protects and safeguards Clatsop State Forest and the broader community.

We request that the state postpone the approval of the HCP and reengage with local elected officials to prepare a plan that is more nuanced, equitable and sustainable for the health and well-being of this community.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners is committed to work with the Oregon Department of Forestry to this end.

We can do better.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair
Clatsop County Board of Commissioners

Attachment



HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN IMPACTS TO CLATSOP COUNTY

Clatsop County supports the development of a Western Oregon State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan.

But, the current version has significant implications for our rural community.



A 35% reduction in annual timber revenues – with no upward adjustments over time is the “worst case scenario” for taxing jurisdictions, businesses, schools and other social and civic structures in our community.

In rural communities like Clatsop County, we need more family wage job creators – not less. Timber provides vital discretionary revenues to local governments and the industry supports a wide range of family-wage jobs, businesses and philanthropic activities.

↓\$1.4M

PUBLIC SAFETY & JUSTICE

Reduce discretionary funding to Public Safety and Justice - \$906,500
Rural Law Enforcement - \$434,000
State Land Enforcement - \$76,000



↓\$900K

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Reduce funds for Assessment and Taxation Clerks Office (Elections and Recording), Internal Services, Parks, Community Development and other General Fund departments.



↓\$600K

PUBLIC WORKS

Reduce funds available to maintain and repair roughly 232 miles of roads, bridges, culverts and other infrastructure.

Pavement Condition Index will degrade over time; increasing costs of maintenance/repair.



↓\$32K

4H / EXTENTION

Reduce funds available for programming and services related to administrative staff, operational expenses and program supplies.



↓\$30K

FAIRGROUNDS

Reduce funds available for repair & maintenance of Fairgrounds property and facilities.



Total Impact

Annual Revenue Reduction for Clatsop County

↓\$3M

Family-wage jobs are the cornerstone of a healthy and sustainable community. The HCP process must study the impacts of job loss on our rural economy prior to approval. We urge the board to consider the fact that Clatsop County does not have the transportation system and developable lands (including industrial) that can make up for the loss of timber supported jobs. The state needs to examine all impacts of the HCP since its ramifications will impact this community for generations.



Postpone the approval of the HCP and reengage with local elected officials to prepare a plan that is more nuanced and equitable.



This will impact the people in our community's health and well-being for generations to come. We deserve better.