

## **Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education**

Public Hearing

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### **Statewide Public Service Programs**

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Chair Galizio and members of the Committee, I am Hal Salwasser, Director of the Oregon Forest Research Laboratory.

Today, I want to describe for you the Statewide Public Service Programs administered for all Oregonians by Oregon State University and their values and contributions to economic prosperity and quality of life in our state.

The three Statewides are the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, the Oregon Forest Research Laboratory and the Oregon Extension Service. These Programs are the state's research, technology development and outreach education agencies for all natural resources in Oregon. These signature research centers have been around for many decades directly contributing to Oregon's natural resources economic vitality, our quality of life and community livability. They are to Oregon's natural resources sector what ETIC is for our engineering and technology sectors. And the natural resources are foundational to the state's future economy as Michael Porter noted at a recent Oregon Business Summit.

Oregon's natural resources create the primary identity of our state. There's a reason for the fish, trees and wheat on the carpets in this building. Natural resources are to Oregon what finance is to New York and government is to Washington DC. Say Oregon to many people and what comes to mind are rich and abundant forests, tranquil and productive farmlands, clean, clear waters full of fish, gorgeous coastlines, and vibrant marine fisheries. Associated with these

landscapes are businesses and industries that create about 20% of Oregon's annual economy, \$24 billion in total industrial output, more than 155,000 direct jobs, and major portions of the state's traded sector economy. These natural resources belong to and in Oregon. They cannot be outsourced. But they can be neglected and degraded if left unmanaged, un-conserved, or under-funded.

Well managed and well invested, Oregon's natural resources sustainably deliver the foods, wood-based products, recreational experiences and cultural connections that Oregonians depend upon and cherish. They sustain thousands of jobs throughout both urban and rural areas. And they create wealth that supports funding for vital public services such as schools, public health and security. The OSU Statewide Programs' sole focus is enhancing Oregon's natural resources based economy, environmental quality and community livability.

Today and in the future, the natural resources sector in Oregon faces intense and growing market pressure from foreign producers. Maintaining competitive advantage requires continual adaptation and innovation focused on productivity, product quality, product differentiation, marketing, and sustainability. The Statewides deliver the research and technology development and extend it to users with the goal of helping them retain or gain market advantage. This is done at the Food Innovation Center, the Oregon Wood Innovation Center, the Oregon Fish Hatchery Research Center, the Watersheds Research Cooperative, the Center for Intensive Planted-forest Silviculture, and countless other programs at Extension offices and Agricultural Experiment Stations throughout the state. Successful Statewide programs feed the success of Oregon's natural resources sector and our capacity for success at OSU needs renewed investment if we expect a richer future for Oregon.