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November 12, 2014

The Honorable Mary Landrieu
Chair
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Landrieu and Ranking Member Murkowski:

We write today in support of Senator Ron Wyden's amendment in the nature of a substitute to S. 1784, the Oregon and California Land Grant Act. Senator Wyden has struck a delicate balance between protecting clean water, ancient forests, fish and wildlife habitat and increasing the supply of timber to local mills. We also support committee approval of S. 841, the Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act, and S. 776, the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Act.

Appropriate management of the 2.6 million acres of the so-called O&C Lands in western Oregon has been the subject of public debate, administrative action, and legal wrangling for decades. Senator Wyden's legislation would settle the debate by designating different portions of the land for conservation and timber production.

The conservation designations are a fair balance, protecting a broad mix of values and resources, including: wilderness for the world-famous Rogue River Canyon and Devil's Staircase, salmon habitat on the Molalla and Illinois Rivers among others, recreation areas for primitive and developed use, clean drinking water, and reserves for rare plants. Perhaps most important, the legislation would forever protect more than 500,000 acres of ancient forests, and would maintain the critical protections of the Endangered Species Act.

The legislation also designates areas where timber harvest will occur using scientist-supported silvicultural techniques, commonly referred to as "ecological forestry." This harvest will go a long way toward creating economic activity in rural Oregon communities and provide revenue to support county services.

Senator Wyden deserves great credit for listening to the diverse views of Oregonians and crafting a balanced solution to conserving and actively managing the O&C Lands. We support his product and urge you to support it as well.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Nicole Cordan at 503-765-1132 or David Dreher at 202-321-6796.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Matz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Matz
Director, U.S. Public Lands
The Pew Charitable Trusts

Cc: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee