



**OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

June 13, 2023

Timothy G. Sekerak  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol Building  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation – HB 5048A

Chief Clerk Sekerak,

In 2016, Lone Rock Resources placed a bid to purchase the Elliott State Forest for \$220.8 million, but former Governor Brown insisted the forest remain in public ownership.

During the 2022 Session, SB 1546 was passed and established the Elliott State Forest as a research resource. As described in SB 1546, a list of tasks was to be completed on or before July 1, 2023. The State Land Board was to report to an interim or regular committee of the Legislative Assembly related to forests on or before September 15, 2023, on whether all the tasks occurred. If the tasks were completed, the measure will become operative by January 1, 2024.

In 2022, OSU estimated an initial investment of approximately \$23 million from 2024-2026 for research equipment and operational costs. These costs were being targeted as federally funded, and if federal funds were not allocated then it was not known what entity would pay the costs. Additionally, OSU estimated \$17 million in capital costs for research and administrative facilities. However, no determinate costs were reported at the conclusion of the passage of SB 1546.

HB 5048A allocates \$4 million for biennial expenses towards the research forest. Approximately \$599,902 for professional service contracts and \$3.4M for research operations for 18 months. Had the forest been sold, this is \$4M that could have gone to other programs within the state budget.

As of this moment, we are unaware of the status of completion in the original task list. Is there a chance of insufficient funds being pulled and allocated in this \$4M allocation since we do not know the outcome of the task list.

I voted against HB 5048A because of the unknown actual costs that will be incurred after the task list report, and because if the forest would have been sold in 2016 for practically the same amount as its appraisal value of \$221 million, this would not be a fiscal issue for the state. In fact, the forest could have been professionally managed, generated funds for the state school fund, local communities, and could have housed OSU research. This bill prematurely allocates funds towards this project and may very well be too little to accomplish the goals set forth by former Governor Brown.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A Scharf".

Anna Scharf  
State Representative – HD 23