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Oregon Senate Strengthens Protections for Forests and Clean Water

SALEM – Today, the Oregon Senate approved Senate Bill 1602, which substantially improves clean water protections for Oregon’s forest communities and enshrines [the commitment](#) made by Oregon’s timber industry and major environmental groups to collaborate on a course forward to establish science-based forest management in Oregon.

Senate Bill 1602 will protect Oregon’s rural communities by prohibiting the application of aerial pesticides near homes and schools that harm human health. The bill also strengthens protection of waterways, specifically salmon, steelhead and bull trout streams, by creating buffers where logging and aerial spraying is deemed harmful to waterways and wildlife.

“This legislation is a welcome commitment to pursue science-based rules for managing the forests that Oregonians value and love,” said Senator Jeff Golden (D-Ashland), who recently became Chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. “It’s also a genuinely historic step towards resolving a conflict that’s divided us for far too long.”

The bill also includes the formalization of an agreement between environmental groups and the logging industry to continue productive discussions about modernizing Oregon’s forest practice laws.

“The status quo of aerial pesticide spraying practices has been extremely harmful,” said Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego). “Our vote today will help ensure that forest industry practices are not hurting the health of workers, families and even school children,” he added. “The process the timber industry and environmental groups will undergo will also ensure transparency, which is critical, as these practices have such a great impact on everyday lives and our environment.”

Senate Bill 1602 now goes to the House of Representative for a vote on the House Floor.

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