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## **Conservation groups decry vote by State Treasurer, Secretary of State to sell Elliott State Forest**

*Governor puts forward solid plan to keep 83,000-acre forest public.*

Salem, Oregon—February 15, 2017 – A broad coalition of conservation, hunting, and fishing groups across Oregon *decried a state land board vote pushing the Elliott State Forest to brink of privatization yesterday.*

Democratic State Treasurer Tobias Read and Republican Secretary of State Dennis Richardson both voted to continue with the sale of the forest to a timber firm, Lone Rock Resources.

Governor Kate Brown opposed the sale and promoted a framework to keep the forest in public ownership, saying, “It’s in the best interest of Oregonians that the forest stays in public hands for future generations.”

The conservation community has been working on several proposals that fit within Governor Brown’s vision to keep the land publicly accessible, protect older forests and critical salmon and wildlife habitat, safeguard streams and incorporate tribal ownership, while fulfilling the state’s obligation to fund public schools.

As the sale negotiations continue, Governor Brown directed the Department of State Lands to continue to explore options to keep the land public. That direction leaves open the possibility that Oregon Legislature and other parties can craft a viable public option.

Earlier in the meeting, Senate President Peter Courtney expressed his personal support for public ownership, pledging his help in the current session to secure bonding for the proposal.

Said Doug Moore, “We thank the Governor for continuing to work on a proposal that meets the many important public interests in this forest. What’s disappointing is the lack of vision from Treasurer Read and Secretary of State Richardson in failing to help her craft a long term solution that Oregonians will be proud of.”

Treasurer Read motioned to amend the Lone Rock proposal with modest conservation and recreation provisions. These are unlikely to meet the broad conservation and public access goals outlined by the Governor and the conservation community.

"On the anniversary of the State's birth, we should be honoring Oregon and all the values public lands offer Oregonians," said Josh Laughlin with Cascadia Wildlands. "Instead, Treasurer Read and Secretary Richardson voted to privatize the Elliott State Forest, which means more clear cuts, muddy water and locked gates in our great state."

"Public lands are under unprecedented attack across Oregon and the rest of the country. At a time when we need our public officials to stand up for public lands, Governor Brown is stepping up and Treasurer Read appears to be stepping aside," said Bob Sallinger, Conservation Director with the Audubon Society of Portland.

The Lone Rock proposal to protect streams has standards far below the protections under the current Elliott State Forest plan. Meanwhile, thousands of acres of 100-year-old forest will be open to clearcutting.

"Our coastal salmon runs depend on public lands, and this sale sets a terrible precedent for other public lands in Oregon and across the West," said Bob Van Dyk, Oregon and California policy director at the Wild Salmon Center.

Conservation groups will now turn to the legislature and other stakeholders to advance a public ownership option. The next State Land Board meeting will be April 11th.

Josh Laughlin, Cascadia Wildlands  
Doug Moore, Oregon League of Conservation Voters  
Tom Wolf, Oregon Council Trout Unlimited  
Bob Van Dyk, Wild Salmon Center  
Bob Sallinger, Portland Audubon  
Cameron La Follette, Oregon Coast Alliance  
Max Beeken, Coast Range Forest Watch  
Noah Greenwald, Center for Biological Diversity