

**American Bird Conservancy ✦ Audubon Society of Corvallis
Audubon Society of Portland ✦ Bark ✦ Californians for Western
Wilderness ✦ Cascade Forest Conservancy ✦ Cascadia Wildlands
Coast Range Association ✦ Conservation Northwest
Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) ✦ Friends of
the Kalmiopsis ✦ Geos Institute ✦ Great Old Broads for Wilderness
✦ Hells Canyon Preservation Council ✦ Klamath Forest Alliance ✦
Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center ✦ Northcoast Environmental
Center ✦ Olympic Park Associates ✦ Oregon Wild ✦ Pacific Rivers
✦ Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment ✦ Salem Audubon
Society ✦ Soda Mountain Wilderness Council ✦ Umpqua
Watersheds, Inc. ✦ Western Environmental Law Center ✦
WildEarth Guardians**

August 9, 2017

Dear Senator/Representative:

The undersigned forest and wildlife conservation organizations seek to alert you to the profound and far-reaching changes in the Forest Management Improvement Act, S. 1731, and H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forest Act. These bill threaten to eliminate existing environmental protections for the magnificent older forests of the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere that provide clean drinking water for local communities, habitat for threatened fish and wildlife, and outdoor hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities for the public that cherish our nation's public lands. We urge you to please vote no on S. 1731/H.R. 2936.

If enacted, H.R. 2936 would remove important protections provided by the Endangered Species Act, National Forest Management Act, the Northwest Forest Plan and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The bill would allow forest plans to be changed without public involvement or environmental review, and removes important protections for rare species in wet forests and older forest habitat in drier forests of the Pacific Northwest. S. 1731 includes similar provisions undercutting NEPA and judicial review.

Additionally, S. 1731/H.R. 2936 would spur more road construction, which is the leading cause of sediment in streams and rivers, and degrades fish habitat while polluting municipal drinking water supplies. The Forest Service currently receives only 20% of the funding necessary to maintain the existing road system. Building more roads is economically and ecologically irresponsible.

A more reasonable alternative would provide for permanent protection of the region's mature forests and watershed restoration that would benefit the recreation economy, provide clean drinking water, sequester and store carbon that otherwise would pollute

the atmosphere as these forests are recognized by scientists as a globally important carbon sink.

Federal forests belong to all Americans so it is also essential that all of the effort and public engagement that went into the existing forest plans, and the requirements for best-science and public participation as authorized by the Endangered Species Act, National Forest Management Act and National Environmental Policy Act, be retained.

Monitoring reports reveal that the mature forest ecosystem is being successfully restored, water quality improved, and the region's forests have gone from being a source of carbon pollution from logging to an important long-term carbon sink for emissions. Building on this success would help ensure the high quality of life and the outdoor economy that is driving economic growth in the region.

More detailed analysis of S. 1731 and H.R. 2936 provided by The Wilderness Society, Earthjustice, Western Environmental Law Center and American Bird Conservancy, and our recommended legislative principles are attached. If you have any questions or seek more information, please contact Steve Holmer, sholmer@abcbirds.org, [202-888-7490](tel:202-888-7490), or Susan Jane Brown, brown@westernlaw.org, 503-914-1323.

Please support protecting older forests, clean water, outdoor recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat of the Pacific Northwest by opposing S. 1731 and H.R. 2936 and keeping the public involved in the fate of their public lands.

Sincerely,

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