

WASHINGTON, DC— Representatives Peter DeFazio (OR-04), Greg Walden (OR-02), and Kurt Schrader (OR-05) announced the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association's (OSSA) recent endorsement of the bipartisan O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act. The OSSA joins a long list of local supporters for the plan, which aims to break the decades-long logjam on federal forest policy, put Oregonians back to work, improve forest health, and disentangle the health of rural counties from unpredictable federal support payments.

In January, the Oregon State Legislature overwhelmingly passed a resolution of support for the DeFazio-Walden-Schrader plan. Fifteen county boards of commissioners also passed resolutions of support so far this year. And a poll commissioned by the Association of O&C Counties in March revealed that 67% of Oregonians support the plan.

"Sheriffs in Oregon have been forced to stretch their budgets to the limit for years. Recent budget cuts have forced painful layoffs, eliminated jail beds, restricted hours of service, and limited their ability to respond to rural emergencies. Our bipartisan plan would provide needed revenue to struggling rural Oregon communities and prevent disastrous budget cuts to public safety. We thank the Sheriffs for their strong support and thank them for their service to Oregon," said Rep. DeFazio.

"Oregon's sheriffs are on the front line of keeping our communities safe," Rep. Walden said. **"We appreciate their strong support of our legislation to give rural Oregon communities the resources they need to create jobs in the woods to support essential local services like law enforcement, education, and roads."**

"Our Sheriffs are committed to maintaining the security of Oregon's counties. Unfortunately, they are one of the first to get hit with layoffs and restricted services in a slowly recovering economy. With so many of rural Oregon communities edging an economic cliff, our plan would provide certainty of keeping doors open while putting more jobs back in the woods. This endorsement should send a strong message to Congress: move the bipartisan O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act forward," said Rep. Schrader.

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Background

Last fall, DeFazio, Walden, and Schrader worked with stakeholders to reach a bipartisan agreement on a long-term plan for the O&C counties. Since then, they've been working with the House Resources Committee to integrate the provisions of their proposal into larger committee legislation. Currently, House Resources is working out the details of the larger bill. A discussion draft was posted to the member's websites in February where constituents can send feedback and suggest changes to the draft.

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