

3. <http://defazio.house.gov/media-center/press-releases>

MEDIA RELEASE: DeFazio-Walden-Schrader O&C Bill Passes U.S. House of Representatives

Sep 20, 2013
Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 20, 2013**

DeFAZIO-WALDEN-SCHRADER O&C BILL PASSES U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Plan creates jobs & generates up to \$90 million a year for rural Oregon counties

WASHINGTON, DC- Today, after nearly two years of negotiations, the United States House of Representatives passed the bipartisan O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act (OCTCJA). The legislative proposal from House Natural Resources Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR), and Representatives Greg Walden (R-Hood River) and Kurt Schrader (D-Canby), would create thousands of private sector jobs in Oregon, provide stable funding for failing Oregon counties, and provide permanent protection for old growth and natural treasures while saving the federal government tens of millions of dollars.

The DeFazio-Walden-Schrader plan will generate as much as \$90 million a year for struggling rural Oregon counties. The bill also includes critical Secure Rural Schools transition payments that will sustain counties until the long-term management plan is implemented. Under this bill, failing, rural Oregon counties will receive an estimated \$166 million for basic government services like education, roads, and law enforcement. DeFazio issued the following statement in response:

“Eighteen O&C counties on the brink of financial disaster can rest a little easier today. After two years of negotiations, the House passed our bipartisan, balanced O&C solution that creates private sector jobs, provides revenues to failing counties, and permanently protects old growth and other irreplaceable environmental treasures. This isn’t a perfect bill, and it’s not the bill I would have written if I were in the majority party-- but it’s the start of this legislative process and the only shot we had to move something that protects both our conservation values and vital public services out of the hyper-partisan House of Representatives.

“Despite criticism from special interest groups, this bill includes many critical conservation victories. The House hasn’t passed a wilderness bill since the Republicans took over in 2010—yet we were able to double the Rogue Wilderness Area and create new wilderness around the Devil’s Staircase. The majority has fought to undo major environmental protections like the Clean Water Act—yet we were able to add key provisions that will protect over 300,000 acres of land to safeguard drinking water and watersheds. Two court cases in the D.C. circuit court could liquidate the last remaining old growth in Oregon—yet we were able to pass the first ever permanent protection of over 1 million acres of old growth.

“As I have said publicly multiple times, three titles that would dramatically change U.S. Forest Service land management in H.R. 1526 will die in the Senate—they will not move forward. I couldn’t vote to let the bipartisan, balanced O&C solution and Secure Rural Schools transition payments die along with it. Oregon needs a solution, and moving this bipartisan O&C compromise forward to the Senate is a significant step. I expect Chairman Ron Wyden will make changes so the bill can pass the Democratically controlled Senate and be signed by the president.”

BACKGROUND

Last February, DeFazio, Walden and Schrader offered a realistic, bipartisan legislative proposal to help solve the O&C problems. Their proposal would create jobs, provide revenues to failing Oregon counties, help sustain the local manufacturing base, save the federal government hundreds of millions of dollars, and protect water, fish, and old growth. The proposal has been publicly available on DeFazio's website for over a year and a half. Based on public feedback and recommendations from Governor Kitzhaber's O&C panel, a number of changes were made to better protect drinking water and fish bearing streams. The OCTCJA was included as a separate title in a larger piece of forest legislation offered by Chairman Doc Hastings (R-WA).

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAWS: The bill requires the O&C Trust Lands to be managed in compliance with federal and state laws. The general public will be represented on the Board of Trustees and meetings of the Board involving management decisions will be open to the public.

ESTIMATED HARVEST LEVELS: The OCTCJA would produce an estimated 400-500 million board feet per year – less than one third of historic levels. To put the proposal in perspective, more than 3,500,000,000 (3.5 billion) board feet of timber is logged each year in the State of Oregon. The O&C lands currently account for less than six percent of that total. Seventy eight percent comes from private and tribal lands.

Private industry lands in Oregon are typically managed on a 30-40 year rotation. The O&C plan requires at least half of the landscape to be managed on a long rotation of between 100-120 years and to be geographically dispersed across the landscape to provide ecological diversity. The plan also minimizes the use of pesticides and provides the first ever legislative protections for mature and old growth forests.

WATERSHED AND DRINKING WATER PROTECTIONS: In response to comments received over the last year, including recommendations from Governor Kitzhaber's task force, several **changes were made to better protect Oregonians' drinking water and fish bearing streams. The OCTJCA protects approximately 20 percent – or 300,000 acres – of the O&C Trust lands to safeguard drinking water and key watersheds. This is four times the protection offered under Oregon State Law.** It limits application of herbicides and requires a public process for the development of an integrated Pest Management Plan. During markup of H.R. 1526 in the House Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Napolitano from California offered an amendment to preserve the status quo of herbicide use on the O&C Trust Lands. Mr. DeFazio voted yes. The amendment was defeated on a party line vote.

WILDERNESS AND RIVER PROTECTIONS: The plan includes **90,000 acres of new wilderness, 130 miles of new Wild and Scenic river designations, and provides the first legislative protection for more than 1,200,000 acres of mature and old growth forests.** The plan also excludes environmentally sensitive areas, parks and recreation areas, wild and scenic corridors, and wilderness areas from the O&C Trust lands.

H.R. 1526: H.R. 1526, the Restoring Healthy Forests for Healthy Communities Act, is a package of **five bills** (known as titles) related to national forest management. Mr. DeFazio wrote Title III relating to the statutorily unique O&C Lands, which he coauthored with Rep. Greg Walden and Rep. Kurt Schrader. Title V, the final title of H.R. 1526, would extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act (aka "county payments") for one year at the Fiscal Year 2010 level. This title would provide approximately \$166 million to failing, rural Oregon counties for basic government services like education, roads, and law enforcement. **Mr. DeFazio supports Titles III and V of H.R. 1526.**

Titles I, II, and IV were written by Republicans, target U.S. Forest Service Lands (not O&C Lands), and are extremely controversial. Democrats offered an amendment (the Huffman amendment) to completely replace the controversial Titles I, II, and IV with non-controversial and Republican supported forest management provisions. That substitute failed on a party line vote. **Mr. DeFazio voted yes on that substitute.**

The OCTCJA has secured broad support across the state, including: the Oregon House, Oregon Senate, fifteen county boards of commissioners, the Oregon State Sheriffs Association, and labor and industry groups.