

February 14, 2008

The Honorable Theodore Kulongoski
Governor of the State of Oregon
State Capitol, Room 160
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Kulongoski,

The purpose of this letter is to request your designation of the Harney County Restoration-Based Resource Project as an Oregon Solutions project. This project is very important to our community and could serve as a model for other rural communities in this state and in other parts of the country.

Oregon's rural communities and forests are in crisis. Poorly managed federal, state, and private forests put both forests and communities at risk of damage caused by uncharacteristically severe fires, rob hard working people of good paying jobs, and cause damage to forests caused by overstocked stands and unchecked pests. You are uniquely positioned to lead Oregon's efforts to meet this crisis head on. We pledge to work together to help achieve the triple bottom line for rural communities and their forests; sustainable forests, strong Oregon businesses, and healthy communities.

We respectfully request your support for our proposal for an Oregon Solutions project to bring diverse partners from the community, government agencies and non-profits together to build a Declaration of Cooperation to support a landscape-scale National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process targeting the eastern portion of the Emigrant Ranger District. This project would take place within a larger effort to forge consensus for the future management of Eastern Oregon's forests. We anticipate the project would build local capacity to address future natural resource issues in the Harney Basin and in other areas with similar forest health issues.

We have met with Oregon Solutions staff to discuss how we might work together to address community concerns. We believe that the Oregon Solutions collaborative approach will help us move forward quickly and effectively, and your support, demonstrated by this designation, would help bring a diversity of partners to the table to achieve results.

Sincerely,



Steven E. Grasty
Judge, Harney County Court



Gary Marshall
Chairman, High Desert Partnership



Russ Hoeflich
Oregon Director, The Nature Conservancy



Gary L. Benes
USFS, Malheur National Forest

cc: Mike Carrier, Governor's Natural Resource Advisor
Ray Naff, Governor's Economic Revitalization Team
Steve Greenwood, Oregon Solutions