Lane County and the Association of O&C Counties
2019 campaign to withdraw from AOCC

Background:
Lane County is a member of the Association of O&C Counties (AOCC), an unincorporated private organization which exists to advocate for logging of public forests known as “O&C lands” managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Member counties are represented by a commissioner at AOCC meetings – Lane County is currently represented by Jay Bozevich.

Over $100,000 of tax payer money was allocated in Lane County’s budget to support the AOCC in FY2018 alone. These funds support a wide variety of efforts by the AOCC to pursue an aggressive timber-dominant interpretation of the O&C Act through litigation and lobbying. AOCC is currently engaged in a lawsuit to overturn the protection of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon, and in the past it has sued to increase logging on O&C lands, and frequently testified before Congress and lobbied in favor of various logging bills that would dramatically alter forest management in the Pacific Northwest, creating logging loopholes to our environmental laws and requiring that millions of acres of public forestland throughout Oregon be managed for the sole purpose of timber production.

To continue supporting the AOCC is to be complicit in these attacks on public forest lands. Recently, Oregon’s most populous county, Multnomah County, pulled out of the Association due to its radical anti-public land agenda. Lane County should do the same.

Ways to be involved:
• Submit letters to the editor (Register Guard and Eugene Weekly)
• Contact your County Commissioner
• Attend and testify at Board of Commissioner meetings.

Key points:
• Lane County should not spend funds to support an advocacy organization that is not transparent to the public.
• Lane County residents have the right to know what the dues paid to the AOCC are supporting, and have a say in whether to support those efforts.
• Lane County should withdraw from/stop supporting the AOCC because Lane County residents do not support the organization’s efforts to weaken environmental laws and increase logging on O&C lands.
• Funds sent to support AOCC can be better used by Lane County, including to advocate for county funding and improve O&C forest management on its own.
• To continue supporting the AOCC is to be complicit in group’s anti-environmental and anti-public lands protection agenda.
• Lane County should join Multnomah County in withdrawing from the AOCC by no longer paying member dues to the association or funding anti-environmental litigation with taxpayer dollars.

**Asks of the Board of Commissioners:**

• Withdraw from AOCC membership by not funding membership dues or their litigation fund.
  o Fallback ask: Stop funding litigation or other specific things Lane County does not support.
  o Fallback ask: Appoint a representative to the AOCC who will work to change its positions, not uphold the status quo.

• Ensure the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee receives thorough and balanced information about the AOCC to inform their review and recommendations.
  o Request AOCC informational work session before a budget decision is made.
  o Make AOCC information available to the public and open to comment.

• Explore alternative ways of getting “benefits” AOCC provides (such as lobbying for Secure Rural Schools funding for counties).

**Sample Letter to the Editor:**

I was glad to see the daylighting of Lane County’s involvement in the Association of O&C Counties (AOCC) in the Eugene Weekly in February. It’s about time the County dropped out of this undemocratic, anti-environmental special interest group.

As a member of the AOCC, Lane County is supporting a wide variety of other efforts to roll back our environmental laws and dramatically increase logging levels on our public lands. Last year, this anti-public lands Association used county funds to lobby for radical logging bills in Congress and pressure Trump’s Interior Secretary to shrink the Cascade-Siskiyou.

Places like the Cascade-Siskiyou and the old-growth forests that remain in our backyard forests managed by the BLM are special. They provide us with places to hike and bike, clean water, and homes for wildlife – but all the AOCC sees is more timber. This group keeps pushing for logging of our public lands, like the 100 acres of clearcutting we’re about to see in the Thurston Hills.

Our county should not be complicit in these attacks on public lands! Multnomah County recently pulled out of the Association due its lawsuit against the Cascade-Siskiyou, and Lane County can too. I urge our County Commissioners to stand up for public lands by withdrawing from the Association of O&C Counties.

**Resources:**

• Writing letters to the editor: [https://oregonwild.org/letters-editor](https://oregonwild.org/letters-editor)
• BoC contact info: Call (541) 682-4203, and find e-mails on individual commissioner pages: [https://lanecounty.org/government/county_departments/board_of_county_commissioners](https://lanecounty.org/government/county_departments/board_of_county_commissioners)
• Contact Chandra LeGue (cl@oregonwild.org) or Doug Heiken (dh@oregonwild.org) at Oregon Wild for more background if desired! 541-344-0675