

## **Summary of Multnomah County’s Departure from the AOCC**

- Multnomah County has decided to end its membership in the Association of O&C Counties (AOCC) over the Association’s lawsuit to overturn parts of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon.
- The Monument faces attacks on numerous levels, such as lawsuits brought by logging interests and an impending Executive Order from President Trump to shrink its boundaries.
- In a letter to the Association, Multnomah County Chair, Deborah Kafoury, said that the county believes that “protecting critical habitats and special places like the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument are consistent with the uses of O&C lands will lead to long term economic and ecological gains for Oregon”.
- Chair Kafoury continued, “Legal actions taken by AOCC to try and block the expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument by the Obama administration, however, are not consistent with this vision for our community.”
- Now that Multnomah County has withdrawn from the AOCC, county funds will no longer fund the AOCC nor their lawsuit to overturn protections for the Cascade-Siskiyou.
- Multnomah County’s decision is significant because it shows that local governments are willing to stand up the Trump administration's brazen attempts to erode or eliminate environmental laws and protections on public lands.

### **More about the Association of O&C Counties**

- The Association claims to represent 17 county governments in Oregon who have historically received money from logging publicly-owned forests on O&C lands (about 2.6 million acres of public land, mostly managed by the Bureau of Land Management, in Western Oregon).
- Historically, counties with O&C lands received a cut of the revenue from logging of public lands. After the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan reduced old-growth logging, federal transition payments were created to help fund counties while they adjusted to the reduction in logging revenues. During the Obama administration, the AOCC shifted away from advocating for those payments, and instead became an extension of the logging industry effort to dismantle conservation protections and increase public lands logging.

- This came to a head early this year when the AOCC filed their lawsuit to overturn the 2001 and 2017 Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument designations, and began lobbying the Trump administration and members of Congress to overturn protections for the Cascade-Siskiyou.
- In recent months we've learned that the Trump administration's plans to shrink four of America's National Monuments, one of which is the Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. The administration's goal is to accommodate logging interests seeking to log mature and old-growth forests on O&C lands within the monument boundaries.
- In short, they are demanding that these lands be managed for the sole purpose of logging. The lawsuit contends that the O&C Act's imperative to prioritize logging over all other uses supersedes other federal laws, such as the Antiquities Act and Endangered Species Act.
- The AOCC has also advocated for the weakening of bedrock environmental laws like the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and National Environmental Policy Act, and their current lobbying efforts have played a major role in focusing President Trump's attention on the Cascade-Siskiyou.

### **More on the Cascade-Siskiyou**

- Originally designated by President Clinton in 2000 and expanded by President Obama a year ago, the Cascade-Siskiyou is the first and only National Monument specifically established to protect biological diversity.
- In addition to hosting an exceptional range of flora and fauna, the monument area is an important Pacific Northwest biological connectivity corridor which enables species to move back and forth between neighboring ecoregions.
- The Cascade-Siskiyou also provides extraordinary recreational opportunities such as hiking, horseback riding, and backcountry skiing, which in turn helps support Southern Oregon's growing recreation-based economy.
- In addition, the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument is home to spectacular old-growth forests and a rich legacy of native fish and wildlife unlike any other in the Pacific Northwest. These remnant forests represent some of the last old-growth habitat left in the region, and should be set aside and managed as a legacy for future generations.