



## **EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 07- 21**

### **GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON FEDERAL FOREST PAYMENTS AND COUNTY SERVICES**

Oregon counties face severe financial challenges as the federal government reconsiders its long-standing financial support for counties with federal forest lands.

This support, in the form of "federal forest payments" for schools, roads and general government services, totaled \$230 million in 2006-07. But, despite determined efforts by Oregon's Congressional delegation and strong advocacy by Oregon counties and the State, Congress has yet to reauthorize these payments for the federal fiscal year that began October 1.

Even with reauthorization of these payments, funding levels are likely to decline in the future. Further, any delay in reauthorization, as we are now experiencing, will destabilize already-shaky budgets and force continued retrenchment of services in counties with large expanses of federal forest lands.

At some point, the diminishing ability of certain counties to maintain essential services will pose a problem for all of Oregon. We confronted that reality earlier this year, when reauthorization of federal forest payments was delayed until nine months into the federal fiscal year. One county asked the State for a declaration of emergency. Another announced that it will turn back to the State the responsibility for providing mental health and alcohol and drug treatment services. Others scaled back Sheriff's patrols, reduced court services and closed libraries.

Another delay or reduction of federal funding will cause more damage to county services, threaten the protection of health and safety and heighten the urgency of appeals for assistance from the State. This is why state and county leaders must come to agreement on their respective roles and responsibilities to deal with the delay or reduction of federal forest payments to our counties.

County leaders and legislators have begun to seek solutions that can work for our counties and the State. The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) has worked with the legislature to prepare an inventory and assessment of services whose funding and delivery are shared by state and county governments. More recently, AOC President and Lane County Commissioner Bobby Green called for a joint county-state effort "to forge permanent solutions to the public finance disorder that has been exposed" by the potential loss of federal forest payments and to use this crisis as an opportunity to strengthen the partnership among counties, the State and the federal government.



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The Office of the Governor and the executive agencies of the State of Oregon are committed to assisting Oregon's counties in identifying and implementing actions that can stabilize and improve the provision of services at the county level and in working with the counties and the legislature to forge permanent solutions to the public finance crisis caused by the delay and potential reduction of federal forest payments to county governments.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DIRECTED AND ORDERED:**

1. The "Governor's Task Force on Federal Forest Payments and County Services" (the "Task Force") is established.
2. The Task Force shall consist of eighteen members as follows:
  - a. Tim Nesbitt, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, who shall serve as chair;
  - b. Max Williams, Director of the Department of Corrections;
  - c. Karen Gregory, the property tax division administrator for the Department of Revenue;
  - d. Bob Repine, Director of the Economic and Community Development Department;
  - e. Marvin Brown, Director of the Department of Forestry;
  - f. Clyde Saiki, Deputy Director of Operations of the Department of Human Services;
  - g. Matt Garrett, Director of the Department of Transportation;
  - h. Bob Jester, Director of the Oregon Youth Authority;
  - i. Tim McLain, Superintendent of the Oregon State Police;
  - j. Mike McArthur, Executive Director of the Association of Oregon Counties;
  - k. Lane County Commissioner Bobby Green;
  - l. Crook County Judge Scott Cooper;
  - m. Jackson County Commissioner C.W. Smith;
  - n. Tillamook County Commissioner Mark Labhart;
  - o. Two members designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
  - p. Two members designated by the President of the Senate.
3. The Governor's Director of Inter-Governmental Relations, Director of Federal Affairs and General Counsel shall provide staff support to the Task Force. The Governor's policy advisors shall provide additional support as requested by the chair.



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4. The Directors of the Department of Administrative Services and the Department's Budget and Management Division shall provide technical assistance to the Task Force. If the Task Force requests assistance from any other executive branch agency of the State, that agency shall provide such assistance.

5. The chair shall establish an agenda for the Task Force and provide leadership and direction for the Task Force. The chair may appoint and approve the creation of subcommittees of the Task Force. The chair may, on behalf of the Governor, request the participation of representatives of County Sheriffs, District Attorneys, County Assessors and other county officials or associations of local government officials.

6. A quorum for Task Force meetings shall consist of a majority of the appointed members. The Task Force shall strive to operate by consensus; however the Council may approve measures and make recommendations based on an affirmative vote of the majority of the quorum present.

7. The Task Force shall compile and review research on the impact on services provided by counties and the State from any delay or reduction in federal forest payments. The Task Force shall develop recommendations regarding administrative, budgetary, statutory and, if necessary, constitutional changes needed to provide stable and adequate funding for the provision of essential services at the county level. In fulfilling its charge, the Task Force shall:

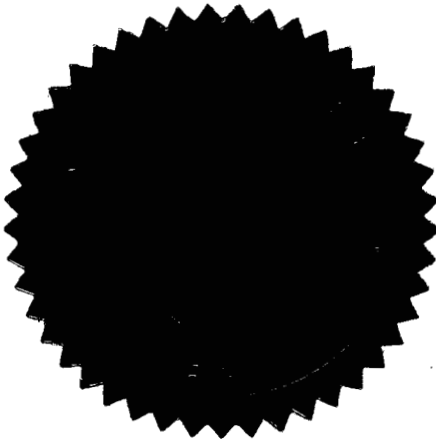
- a. Compile an assessment of likely service impacts in each affected county from a reduction or termination of federal forest payments and a comparison of each county's ability to provide essential services within their statutory and constitutional taxing authorities;
- b. Prepare projections of future timber revenues under current and proposed policies for managing timber harvests from federal lands;
- c. Identify services for which the State provides funding, partners with the counties or relies on the counties for service delivery;
- d. Gather suggestions from the counties and state agencies for organizational and policy changes that can yield more cost-effective delivery of services at the county level;
- e. Develop recommendations for executive and legislative action; and




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- f. Support efforts to secure the continuation of federal forest payments.
8. The Task Force shall direct its recommendations to:
  - a. The Governor;
  - b. The Task Force on Comprehensive Revenue Restructuring established by House Bill 2530;
  - c. The Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
  - d. The President of the Senate.
9. Council members are not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or the per diem provided in ORS 292.495.
10. This Order shall remain in effect until rescinded.

Done at Salem, Oregon this 13th day of November, 2007.



  
Theodore R. Kulongoski  
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

  
Bill Bradbury  
SECRETARY OF STATE