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GRANT COUNTY COURT
Scott W. Myers, County Judge
Jim Hamsher, Commissioner
John Rowell, Commissioner

Umatilla National Forest Supervisor's Office
Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision
Assessment Need for Change
72510 Coyote Rd.
Pendleton, Oregon 97801

November 6, 2024

Dear Blue Mountains Assessment Need for Change Team:

Grant County's Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) has recommended that the County respond to the "Need for Change" document. Grant County Judge Scott W. Myers, Commissioner Jim Hamsher and Commissioner John Rowell, would like to thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft Preliminary Need for Change document. We do agree with NRAC that there is a need for change.

After reading the document we found several areas that you could give some special attention to in the process.

1. You state the 1990 Forest Plan Direction is inconsistent with the 2012 planning rule. The statement seems arbitrary and capricious as to why the two are inconsistent; it is not a clear statement. We would like to see something that explains in plain language what the inconsistencies are.
2. Grant County is not surviving under the current management system that the USFS has implemented over the last 35 years. The word "sustain" is a poor choice of verbiage to bring to a county that is in the top five highest unemployment rates within the state of Oregon. Are you planning to continue to negatively impact Grant County going forward?

It is Grant County's hope that you will bring into play the working lands models for both Forest Restoration and the Local Economy. We are facing the shutdown of our last two sawmills and lay-offs from the Forest Service of their seasonal workers. If you change your need from aquatic restoration, road closures and fungus, to family wage jobs where our citizens can support not only their families but the businesses in the County it would be a much better plan, and a change we as a county court could support.

3. You spoke about working together to create durable, integrated land management plans. The Forest Service failed to include the counties in all aspects of the plan writing process. To that affect we would like to take this time to invoke Coordination in Grant County on the following:
 - a. Development of the final assessment reports & summary
 - b. Need for Change Document and the Draft Land Management plan (proposed action)

The County could assist in accomplishing a great deal to meet the goals and objectives of the agency, while improving the economic conditions of Grant County. We also would like to see our citizens participate in forming the plan. We believe we could eliminate a lot of speculation if we could bring residents to the table and take their input in the same manner as agency staff, and other stakeholder groups.

Maintaining Aquatic Habitats, Ecosystems and Stream restoration are needs that can be met through active forest management including harvest, which would bring vitality to the economy for the entire County. The County fully encourages and promotes active land management, which supports healthy ecosystems, through a robust infrastructure system of roads and access that allows adequate access for an ever-changing landscape. We look forward to Coordinating with you to meet those needs into the future.

We would like to refer to the Blues Intergovernmental Council's Final Socioeconomic Report for Grant County (Exhibit A). The scatter Plot for Grant County's Risk Opportunity is highest of the counties represented. The other counties in this study are proportionately at risk. Grant County would like to see a plan that benefits all, Economically as well as Socially.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Sincerely

 Scott W. Myers

Grant _____

 Jim Hamsher

Grant County Commissioner

 John Rowell

Grant County Commissioner

(Exhibit A) Link – BIC Socioeconomic Report - county specific - Grant County, pg. 40
[bic-socio-economic-subcommittee-risk-opportunity-index-report revised 8-9-2023-2.pdf](#)