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First name: Joel

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Organization: Jackson County Oregon Office of County Counsel

Title: County Counsel

Comments: Dear Mr. Sullens:

Jackson County, Oregon supports the proposed action of authorizing cattle grazing on the National Forest System ("NFS") lands within the East Beaver, Hornbrook, and Ash Creek Allotments. These allotments were previously identified in the Klamath Nation Forest Plan to be suitable for commercial livestock grazing. The proposed action is in keeping with this previous determination and supports the known public demand for grazing in these allotments.

Additionally, cattle grazing on NFS lands provides benefits, which would not be available under the No Action alternative described in the EA. First, cattle grazing removes potential fuels from wild fires. As you are aware, Southern Oregon and Northern California have suffered from extreme wildfires during several of the past summers. If the lands are not grazed by cattle or other livestock as would be the case in the No Action alternative, the vegetation which would have otherwise feed cattle will instead be available to fuel yet another summer or summers of severe wildfires. Second, cattle grazing on NSF has a positive impact on the local economy of Jackson County and the surrounding area. Many of our local ranchers rely on grazing allotments on NFS lands. Not permitting grazing on NSF lands, as would occur under the No Action alternative, would significantly hinder these ranchers' contributions to our local economy.

As such, Jackson County, Oregon strongly supports the proposed action as set forth in the Oak Knoll Range Project Draft EA.

Sincerely,

Joel C. Benton

County Counsel