

November 20, 2006

Press Release | Contact: Danielle Langone (202) 225-6416

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio today requested that the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) work with Lane County to acquire 1,200 acres of land near Mount Pisgah. The property would be used to expand Buford Park and create a nature preserve.

The seller of the property, Wildish Land Company, is seeking \$26 million for the property, a price tag that is too steep for Lane County to afford on its own. In his letter to BPA Administrator Stephen Wright today, DeFazio urged the BPA to work with Lane County to identify possible sources of funding within the agency that may be used to purchase the property.

Under the Northwest Power Act, BPA has a responsibility to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife resources. The Wildish land is important because of its natural and biological diversity. If the county does not purchase the property, it could be sold to developers and an opportunity to preserve open space and wildlife habitat would be lost forever.

The text of letter is below.

November 20, 2006

Mr. Stephen J. Wright
Administrator
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Dear Steve:

I am writing to request that the Bonneville Power Administration work closely with Lane County officials to identify possible sources of funding within your agency for helping the county to acquire 1,200 acres near Mount Pisgah that may be sold by Wildish Land Company. The county would preserve the lands as parks and open space.

As you know, under the Northwest Power Act, Bonneville has a responsibility to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife resources. Purchase of the Wildish property by Lane County would help create a nearly 5,000 acre park and nature preserve extending from Mount Pisgah to the confluence of the Coast Fork and the Middle Fork of the Willamette River. This land is important because of its natural and biological diversity. It is home to hundreds of plants species, dozens of birds and reptiles and numerous amphibians. As Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah have said, "the wetland, prairie and oak savanna habitats [in the areas around Mount Pisgah] are some of the most valuable left in existence in the Willamette Valley."

The Wildish Land Company is seeking \$26 million for the property, a price tag that is too steep

for Lane County to afford on its own. If the county doesn't purchase the property, it could be sold off to developers and an opportunity to preserve open space and wildlife habitat would be lost forever.

Given that Bonneville's statutory responsibilities include a requirement to mitigate for lost wildlife habitat, including habitat in the Willamette Valley, I would appreciate it if you would analyze whether Bonneville has resources that could be used to help acquire the Wildish property and, if so, what level of funding assistance would be possible.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/

PETER DeFAZIO
Member of Congress