



PACIFIC
FOREST
TRUST

Administrative Improvement to the Forest Legacy Program **Frequently Asked Questions**

What does this change aim to do?

The amendment allows accredited land trusts to hold the interests in land (conservation easements) funded in part by the Forest Legacy program, if a state voluntarily chooses to elect this option for a particular easement or easements. This will enhance the strategic targeting, landscape coverage, and impact of the program while expanding partnerships and reducing costs. No other aspect of the program would be changed.

Why is this change needed?

- The amendment leverages more private, philanthropic cost sharing for projects in the Forest Legacy Program, as Forest Legacy does *not* cover the entire cost of projects. Many charitable donors *will* donate to land conservation projects operated by non-profit land trusts, but *won't* donate to government agencies.
- The amendment enables states to conserve strategic lands owned by individuals who do not want a governmental partner in their land ownership. Engagement with these individuals is essential to accomplishing the goal set for Forest Legacy by the US Forest Service: to move the Forest Legacy impact to the landscape scale.
- The amendment increases the impact of the Forest Legacy Program at no cost to the federal government. With federal funding always limited, demand constantly exceeds funding available. Increased charitable funding is essential to match the needs of the Program, as well as to expand the Program's impact via new partnerships.
- The amendment saves money for governments that choose to allow third parties to hold easements, as stewardship and monitoring costs become the responsibility of the land trust.

What DOESN'T this change do?

- The amendment does NOT change the current Forest Legacy application or selection process. The states and the USFS maintain existing control over the process for selecting projects to fund with Forest Legacy.
- The amendment does NOT allow third parties to apply to the USFS for Forest Legacy funding – all projects must still go through the state selection process and then the state pitches for proposals before the USFS.
- The amendment does NOT force states to designate that a land trust hold easements – under the legislation's terms, individual states decide whether third parties can hold easements.
- The amendment does NOT cause the US Forest Service to face extra administrative burdens. USFS will continue to oversee state implementation of Forest Legacy, not the performance of third parties. Many states already exercise this approach for easements that they fund through their own state money.
- The amendment does NOT favor one region of the country over another – the national process for selecting Forest Legacy projects remains the same, and historically this process has sought regional balance in project selection.
- The amendment does NOT create extra demand for Forest Legacy revenue – rather, it allows scarce government money to be dispersed more efficiently, by leveraging greater private sector funding.