

Chamber Files *Amicus* Briefs with U.S. Supreme Court

Briefs Support Two United States Supreme Court Petitions for Certiorari

On December 14, the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce filed a Brief of *Amici Curiae* in support of petition for certiorari filed by petitioners in [*Murphy Company, et al v. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., in his official capacity as President of the United States, et al \(No. 23-525\)*](#). On Friday, December 15, the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce filed a Brief of *Amici Curiae* in support of petition for certiorari filed by petitioners in [*American Forest Resource Council, et al v. United States of America, et al \(No. 23-524\)*](#).

Amicus curiae literally means “friend of the court;” an individual or organization that is not a party to a particular case, but which has interest in the case or information related to a case of critical importance to their community(ies). The chamber’s filings are founded in its long-standing interest and advocacy for active management of public forestland for all designated purposes mandated under the O & C Act of 1937. The chamber is pleased and honored to have NFIB (National Federation of Independent Business) Small Business Legal Center join both briefs in support of said U.S. Supreme Court petitions.

To read the chamber’s *Amicus* Brief in the *American Forest Resource Council, et al* case [CLICK HERE](#). To read the chamber’s *Amicus* Brief in the *Murphy, et al* case [CLICK HERE](#).

There are numerous reasons underlying the chamber’s decision to file briefs in both of these cases. First, the chamber, representing the interests of its members and Douglas County businesses, has significant interest in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Designation, the BLM’s 2016 Western Oregon Resource Management Plan and the impacts due to lack of effective management of O & C Act forestland. Specifically, the threat to the protectable interests of the chamber, its members and the Douglas County businesses for which the chamber advocates.

The chamber’s unique position and perspective provides information about the harm and adverse impacts lack of active management on the public lands at issue, O&C Act lands, as to the health and well-being of citizens and the environment, recreation and economic interests in Douglas County and southern Oregon.

In its brief, the chamber declared the need for effective forest management, in compliance with the O & C Act of 1937, for the purpose of creating healthier, more resilient public lands. Many of our members are directly tied to our natural resource industry, adversely impacted by the lack of management. Other members are indirectly tied to these public lands, but are equally affected by the lack of active management. The lack of management impacts our members not just in the timber and wood products industries but, tourism, recreation and numerous other industries.

The Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce also operates as the Douglas County Chamber of Commerce serving an area of southwest Oregon that is a natural resource-based community. The health and vitality of the chamber, our members, small and large businesses across Douglas County and its residents is tied to the land and, therefore, necessarily intertwined with management of O & C public lands.

The chamber has long advocated for active management of O & C lands in compliance with the O & C Act of 1937. The O & C Act requires that timberland subject to the Act be “managed . . . for permanent forest production,” and that timber grown on the land “be sold, cut, and removed in conformity with the principle of sustained yield.” 43 U.S.C. ss2601. The Cascade-Siskiyou Monument designation and BLM’s resource management plan violate the O & C Act causing harm to the chamber, our members, Douglas County businesses, local governments and our residents.

Chamber members in the timber and wood products industry require reliable, consistent sources of timber to maintain operations, employ citizens, invest in their businesses, invest in the community and keep the local economy viable and growing. Insufficient timber harvest leads to loss of jobs in the local

wood products industry, which in turn adversely affects the chamber and its members. The timber and wood products and ancillary industry jobs account for 15% of Douglas County's employment. Jobs in the wood products industry are generally family-wage positions held by citizens who then patronize our community's many small businesses and utilize local services. Thus, a dollar lost in the timber and wood products industry equals multiple dollars lost in our larger local community economy.

Chamber members in recreational and tourism-related industries, also tied to the land, need public lands that are well-managed for all purposes under the O&C Act for the environmental health of the forests, rivers, streams and wildlife.

Chamber members Douglas County and the city of Roseburg and all cities in our county, among other things, are tasked with providing for the safety and well-being of its residents, as well as an economically vital community. Lack of management of O & C lands for harvest has resulted in a significant financial loss to Douglas County government, estimated in the hundreds of millions over the years, also adversely impacting the annual budgets of all cities in Douglas County.

Chamber educational institution members have suffered financially due to lack of management of O & C forestland and related loss of revenue. Since the 2001 passage of the Secure Rural Schools Act, the federal government made flat payments to Douglas County. However, these payments have declined significantly over the years.

Hundreds of chamber members and the thousands of county businesses for which the chamber has advocated over the years are vast and diverse entities. The common ground is nearly all have ties to, and are being adversely affected by the lack of effective management of public forestland in Douglas County and southern Oregon.

Lack of active management on O & C lands (both within and outside the Monument) is detrimental to forest health, the social and economic health of the individual communities in our county and Douglas County as a whole and even physical health and well-being of our citizens.

The Monument designation and current BLM resource management plans are inconsistent with chamber's interests in effective management of natural resources on public lands on which chamber members, Douglas County businesses and residents depend for their livelihoods and well-being.

Wildfires are an unfortunate fact of life in southwestern Oregon. Active management on O & C lands can ensure that the inevitable fire start will not explode into a catastrophic wildfire that spreads far and fast, destroying natural resources, killing wildlife and threatening people and property in the process. In the aftermath of a wildfire, it is imperative to salvage burned trees promptly to avoid a fuel-laden forest that is primed for a subsequent, more destructive wildfire. Approximately 350,000 acres in Douglas County alone have burned in wildfires in the past 10 years.

It is challenging to promote Douglas County as a visitor destination for outdoor recreation or for our residents to enjoy outdoor leisure activities when smoke from wildfires is choking our region. Catastrophic wildfire concerns connect all chamber members. Once an area of a forest is lost to wildfire, it takes many years to restore the environment to the point that the land supports habitat, recreation and timber harvest.

The Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce began supporting local business in 1908, with its role as advocate only growing over the years. The chamber is a long-time proponent for real, effective management on our public lands to include increased timber harvest, and is protective of the renewable natural resources that we all care about and depend on. The briefs filed in these cases simply exemplify the chamber's unwavering position in support of and commitment to our Douglas County community.