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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

To Chairman Westerman and the Committee on Natural Resources,

First, I would like to thank Chairman Westerman for considering my bill in his markup, and Rep. McGarvey for his co-lead on this legislation. I urge swift passage of the White Oak Resilience Act, which plays a crucial role in ensuring a sustainable future of the American white oak. At current consumption rates, the American white oak tree population will begin to decline significantly in the next 10-15 years, with even more extreme declines over the next several decades. White oak is not only a cornerstone to the ecosystem, but also directly impacts our signature Kentucky bourbon industry.

The act's key provisions range from authorizing the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service to actively participate in white oak restoration projects to harnessing private investment and establishing a white oak restoration fund to support white oak regeneration on national forests. The White Oak Resilience Act is not just about saving trees; it's about preserving our heritage, safeguarding biodiversity, and fortifying an industry that is critical to Kentucky's economy. The future of the bourbon industry, which relies on the unique characteristics of white oak barrels, and the future of countless ecosystems are intertwined with the sustainability of the white oak.

I urge my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee to support this legislation and protect such an important industry across the United States.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Barr".

Congressman Andy Barr