

TESTIMONY  
MAYOR DIANE POHL  
CITY OF CLATSKANIE  
FEBRUARY 5, 2013

TO: House Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee:

Good morning. I am Diane Pohl, Mayor of Clatskanie. I was just sworn in to my fourth term as Mayor last month.

To tell the story of Clatskanie, this community was built on timber and logging from the beginning in the 1800's. Some of the land claims pre-date Oregon statehood.

The city has the responsibility to provide the most basic of services, namely clean water, sewer projects and public safety. In the case of our city, the stewardship of a natural resource of timberland is added to that list.

Over the years, through land donations by a prominent timber family and other procurements, the city has ownership 1,200 acres of timber.

At the beginning, the city council opted to put funds from harvesting the timber into a reserve account, using only the interest to fund capital improvement projects and grants for youth activities. This has carried forward for many years. When interest was at 6% and 7%, the available funds for CIP projects amounted to \$190,000 just from the interest. When a sewer upgrade was needed some years ago, the city opted to borrow \$200,000 from the reserve account. It was paid back to this fund plus interest, resulting in no debt owed. From the first, city councils have opted to manage funds conservatively resulting in our position of no debt and reserves amounting to approximately \$3 million dollars. Without this renewable resource, we would not have been able to accomplish this without a drastic increase in water and sewer fees.

Our city hires a forester to advise us on best forest practices. This includes thinning, brush control and maintenance of roads for fire purposes. Our stand of timber is carefully managed for optimum safety and growth.

According to research, when a tree reaches its maturity, it ceases to sequester carbons. On the other hand, newly planted trees gobble carbons. In this era of concern about global warming and carbon control, it seems



scientifically sound to harvest the timber when mature and plant new trees that will help our environment.

We have a stand of timber approximately 50 years old that needs to be harvested. We have delayed this harvest because of state law that demands we have to sell the timber to domestic markets. These markets have been severely depressed; however, foreign markets have increased their price. We do not feel it fair and equitable to our citizens to sell at depressed prices. It is my hope the legislature might consider legislation that would allow us to sell this timber at the best price regardless of market status to provide the maximum benefit to our city and its taxpayers.

Thank you, Chair Witt and Committee, for allowing me to share my city's experience at using and being good stewards of renewable resources for the security of our city and community.

