

Elisa <elisaturpen@gmail.com>

Dear Chairman Helm and Committee Members,

We wish to submit testimony as follows for the hearing scheduled March 12, 2019 before the House Committee on Energy and Environment that will consider HB 2656. Not only will our family business, Whitewater Forests, be greatly harmed if this becomes law, but it will negatively impact all Oregonians. Members of our family have made their living from Oregon's growing forests for over 60 years. With great pride and expertise, we sustainably grow and harvest timber from our lands in Lane and Douglas Counties. HB 2656 seeks to criminalize responsible forest harvesting, building of access roads, and use of forest chemicals. This bill will make forest operations growing, tending and harvesting our private forests virtually impossible. Our work contributes to the local economy, forest health, fish and wildlife habitat and water quality.

There is no scientific rationale to back up HB 2656. It would degrade water quality and increase risk of forest fires. DEQ data confirms the best water quality in the state comes from forested watersheds, including those with active management. Private forestland would look more like federal forestland: overstocked, diseased, and inaccessible. These forestlands have been the source of roughly 86% of acres burned in Oregon wildfires over the last decade. Wildfires introduce large amounts of sedimentation into surface water, killing fish and increasing municipal drinking water filtration costs. Smoke from these fires also emit millions of metric tons of air pollution, costs the state millions in lost tourism dollars, and negatively impacts the health of Oregonians.

This bill would destroy the productivity of private forestland, which is responsible for roughly 78% of Oregon's timber harvest. Reducing the value of maintaining forestland in the state would encourage forestland owners to convert their land to other uses wherever possible. Oregon's private forestland timber harvest provides logs to over 100 mills in Oregon and creates jobs for more than 60,000 Oregonians. If that harvest disappears, the mills and tens of thousands of rural, family wage jobs disappear as well.

Our family, as a part of the forest products industry, is proud to produce carbon neutral products that are needed by our society. As mentioned above, here in Oregon over three-quarters of the wood products produced come from private forests. Those who choose city life must rely on people like us to provide their food and shelter. HB 2656 devalues the significant contribution we make to society and shortsightedly denies the importance of local and sustainable forest products.

HB 2656 is bad for Oregon's economy, forests and all Oregon residents. There is no science to support the theory that Oregon will have improved water quality with HB 2656. We ask that the committee dismiss this poor, narrow-minded legislation.

Sincerely,

Daniel and Elisa Turpen

CC:

Representative E. Werner Reschke

Representative Sheri Schouten

Representative Andrea Salinas
Representative Lynn Findley
Representative Janeen A. Sollman
Representative Marty Wilde
Representative Anna Williams
Representative Jack Zika
Representative Bill Post