



March 12, 2019

Chair Helm, Members of the Committee,

My name is Heath Curtiss. Most of you know me from my former role as General Counsel of the Oregon Forest Industries Council. At the end of last year, I was honored to accept a position as Vice President of Legal and Government Affairs with Hampton Lumber, a family-owned company with four sawmills in the communities of Banks, Willamina, Tillamook, and Warrenton. I am proud to represent a company that has operated in the state for nearly 80 years, committed to the sustainable management and use of Oregon's greatest renewable resource—its forests. I'm here today to oppose HB 2656 both as an Oregon resident and member of the forest sector.

Though my usual tack is to focus on the substance of the bill, my hope is that today you will indulge a couple personal anecdotes.

The first is that I live in Silverton, Oregon. Our community draws the bulk of its drinking water from Abiqua Creek which drains approximately 80 square miles comprised mostly of private forest lands. The sponsors of this bill would have you believe that, because active forest management occurs within the Abiqua basin, Silvertonians must be suffering compromised water quality. Nothing could be further from the truth. Silverton has excellent water. For more than a decade, our water has met all EPA and state drinking water health standards, and our water provider has received zero violations. In fact, Abiqua Creek is one of the few streams in Oregon that is not listed as impaired.

Silverton's drinking water also comes from Silver Creek and the Silverton reservoir. Immediately upstream of that reservoir, and adjacent to a popular trail, you will find a 40 acre clearcut that's a couple years old. While some folks don't like how clearcuts look, when I take my daughters hiking above the reservoir we remember how lucky we are to live in a warm home, made from Oregon wood, that we can afford.

That leads me to my second anecdote. A while back, I was standing on an elevated deck with Brett Griffin, our Vice President of Manufacturing, watching logs turn into lumber. It occurred to me that we have an old picture of my grandfather's sawmill in Montana showing men pushing logs through a single giant round saw by hand. Over the course of decades, and many people like Brett standing on the shoulders of those who preceded them, the work has become ever more sustainable. Today, our saw performance is measured to the thousandth of an inch, and no fiber is wasted.

Oregon private lands have produced approximately the same volume of logs for several decades. At Hampton, we figure out how to make those logs produce more lumber, and better lumber, at the lowest cost possible. In that way, we ensure the steady stream of people pouring into Oregon every year have a place to live, at a price, we hope, they can afford.

Make no mistake – in an effort to solve a problem we've yet to find, HB 2656 would gut the timber industry. As log supply crashes, log prices would skyrocket, and many Oregon mills would close. The principal effect would be to put rural Oregonians out of work, and drive housing costs even higher. All of this – for nothing. This bill defines bad policy, and I urge your no vote.