

John Dalton

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Dear Legislators,

I am commenting on HB2656, which will affect the ability of my family to manage our property for the production of forest products.

My wife Pam and I own over 900 acres of timberland in Polk County. This is located in the foothills of the Coast Range and includes two watersheds. We have property that was purchased by our respective families, starting with my grandparents and Pam's great-grandparents, as far back as 1917. When purchased, all of these parcels were cut-over forest land that had not been replanted. Through generations of hard work and sacrifice this land has been returned to active timber production.

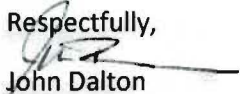
To give you an idea of how long this land has been used for harvesting trees, a survey of the parcel on which we live that was made in 1855 noted "on this line lies Hudson's sawmill." A survey of Rickreall Creek, which runs through this parcel was made in the mid-1990's, and determined that there was no need to take remedial actions to improve fish habitat in this part of the drainage. So, after nearly 150 years of timber production, the stream remains healthy for fish.

This legislation will be devastating for our livelihood. While we do commercial thinning now, eventually the stand becomes so dispersed that it is necessary to make a clearcut so that the buildup of underbrush will not support a fire that will destroy great swaths of forest. We will not be able to use herbicides to control competing vegetation, so our seedlings will die from moisture competition. We have areas which have not yet had road systems built, and this legislation will make it difficult to remove the logs from those areas and result in more damage to the soil than would otherwise occur. As recent events in California have shown, elevated risk of devastating wildfire is likely to start in unmanaged forest land, resulting in smoke, pollution, and CO2 emissions.

Our long-term plan for managing this land will result in clearcuts on only 1/40th of the property each year at most, and trending more toward 1/60th. These will be scattered across the total acreage, so there will not be large swaths of recent harvests. Young trees sequester more carbon than older trees, and that carbon sequestered in the wood will be used to build houses that will keep it out of the atmosphere for hundreds of years.

We see no benefit to this legislation, and in fact, it will make it impossible for us to use our land to support not only our families, but wildlife and recreation as well.

Respectfully,


John Dalton