

Emerald Valley Thinning Inc <oregonlogger54@peak.org>

House Energy and Environment Committee:

I am extremely concerned over HB 2656 and wanted to take the time to submit my concerns to your committee. I am the owner/operators of a small family owned logging business, and I have worked for almost 50 years in the Oregon logging industry. I see every day how private timber owners manage their forests. It appears to me the people who have brought forward this house bill do not understand current forest practices within our state or the actual results we are seeing from properly managed private forest lands.

Oregon's private forests are currently managed under the Oregon Forest Practices Act, which is well respected throughout the United States as an effective, science based set of rules and regulations. In our experience the private forest land owners tend to go above and beyond the current Forest Practices Act already, they take pride in their land and manage it accordingly. There have been lawsuits regarding how the government manages their forests, more government overreach is not what we need. Leave the management of our forests up to the professionals that are in Oregon's forests every day.

I want Oregon to continue to have productive forests that provide for water quality, clean air, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, recreation opportunities, and jobs to thousands of Oregonians. I want Oregon to continue to be the number one softwood lumber producer in the country. I want Oregon to continue to have healthy forests that are not over stocked, diseased, inaccessible, and a fire risk to our state. I want the committee to know that the managers of private forest lands today are continuing to improve our ownerships to make our water quality better than it has been in the past. We continue to use the most advanced and sustainable logging practices that minimize ground disturbance and environmental impacts. The forest land managers within our state are true stewards of the land and are improving the quality of our forests.

I'm afraid that if HB 2656 is passed it will lead to a similar situation that California is facing right now with the extreme risk of fire and utter devastation that mismanaged forests create.

I am truly concerned that this house bill has been brought forward by people who do not understand how private forest land is currently being managed, or that we have laws and regulations in place that govern our forest activities. It concerns me that we could end up with a law based on a lack of understanding, compounded by misinformation presented by the media. There is no science based evidence showing a problem exists that would require the changes brought forward in this bill. HB 2656 does not make sense for Oregon. I am in strong opposition of HB 2656.

Tracy Smouse  
President  
Emerald Valley Thinning Inc.