

March 21, 2019

Dear Committee Members of House Bill 2656,

I am writing to express my total opposition of House Bill 2656. This bill passing, will not only be damaging to our forests' health, but also to our state's economic well-being.

After watching the testimonies brought forward by constituents in support of the bill, I was surprised by the non-scientific based claims that were stated, as well as the naivety that became apparent by some of the committee members' questions that proved the lack of knowledge about the already in place laws of the Oregon Forest Practices Act. Please see through the misleading guise of "Clean Water in our Public Systems," and see it for what it really is--an attack on the Timber Industry.

The nature of douglas fir forests, will not thrive in the conditions of management that will be allowed by House Bill 2656. The trees need sun to thrive and grow, so seedlings will not be able to compete beneath for sunlight beneath the cover of the trees left after a thinning operation. This will lead to diseased and fire susceptible forests, as well as less trees working for our good environmentally and financially.

I find it interesting that no financial or fiscal impact has been filed as part of the overview of House Bill 2656. I watched as the halt of clear cutting happened in the small town of Oakridge in the 1990s. The impact is so vast to not only forest owners, but the communities and families whose jobs depend on this economy:

- Private timber companies
- Small tree farms
- All owners of harvestable timber in Western Oregon, including those people relying on harvesting their timber or timberland as a retirement plan or other financial tool
- Road Construction
- Log Truck Drivers
- Tire Sales
- Mechanics
- Log scalers
- Accountants/Bookkeepers
- Pellet Manufacturers
- Lumber/Plywood Mills
- Truss Builders/Remodelers/Home Builders
- Lumber/Rail Transport of Lumber
- Paper Product Mills
- Construction Costs and Paper Products Rise
- Property Values as families migrate away for other work
- Schools when funding decreases due to families moving and decreased property values
- Restaurants
- Grocery Stores
- Movies theaters
- Beauticians/Barbers
- State firefighters funded by private timber owners
- Gas/Fuel Stations
- Tree planters

It only took me a minute to come up with this vast, but very incomplete list. The impact to my state's coffers, these families and their communities would be detrimental. In a time where the legislature asks all state entities to cut costs (despite record revenues), frantically searches for a way to fund the failing PERS systems and scrambles to fund our K-12 education, are we are really pondering cutting out this huge portion of Oregon's economy?

Please VOTE "NO" on releasing House Bill 2656 out of Committee.

Sincerely,

Abby A. Virtue-Hagle
Oregonian