



STARKER FORESTS, INC.

7240 S.W. PHILOMATH BOULEVARD
P.O. BOX 809
CORVALLIS, OREGON 97339
TELEPHONE (541) 929-2477
FAX (541) 929-2178
www.starkerforests.com

Jacob B. Gibbs, President & CEO - Steven R. Wyatt, CFO & Secretary
Randy L. Hereford, VP & Timber Manager - Marc G. Vomocil, VP & Forestry Manager
B. Bond Starker, Chair of the Board

March 25, 2019

Dear Chair Witt and House Committee on Natural Resources,

Starker Forests has been managing forestlands since 1936. Today, we sustainably manage 89,000 acres of forestland that provides Oregonians with wood products, clean water, wildlife habitat and free recreation to our local and rural communities. We oppose HB 2659 for many reasons. It punishes forest owners who use even-aged forest management and reforest by planting trees with no rationale for why they should be punished. HB 2659 would encourage reductions in active management and ignores the fact that well maintained working family forests in Oregon provide many benefits to all Oregonians.

HB 2659 would tax family forest owners who provide these benefits and motivate them to convert their forests to some other use to be economically viable. The current forest tax programs are designed to encourage forest owners to maintain their forests as forests. However, if HB 2659 passes, the opposite would be true. Family forest owners would be forced to find alternative uses of their lands to help pay the taxes.

This bill could additionally force some forest owners to cut their timber at younger ages to reduce their tax burden and to fund tax payments. At Starker Forests, we are well known for growing trees to a longer rotation of 50 to 70 years. HB 2659 would motivate us to reduce our rotation age to reduce the severe financial consequences of HB 2659.

Finally, HB 2659 invents terms that are not used by trained forestry professionals in modern forestry. "Natural", "semi-natural", "nonforested," and "plantation" forestry are not terms that are used by the forest managing community. "Natural forest", as defined in the bill, does not exist in Oregon. Every acre of Oregon forestland, at some time in history, has been modified by humans. "Nonforested land" would include all forests in Oregon with the exception of non-roaded wilderness areas as road access to any location is considered infrastructure.

This bill would severely impact our ability to own and manage timberland in Oregon.

Please oppose HB 2659.

Jennifer Beathe
Starker Forests, Inc.
(541) 929-2477