

Oregon Legislative Committee,
Senate Rules Committee 3-2-21
Remote Public Testimony
Oregon Board of Forestry Nominations

Chair and Committee Members:

I'm Nancy Webster, Rockaway Beach, and I represent North Coast Communities for Watershed Protection, a grassroots group with over 700 members. I would like to address the critical role the Oregon Board of Forestry plays in our coastal communities and why we support Gov. Brown's nominations. ODF has oversight on forest management for state and private lands. At the coast, the majority of our drinking water is sourced from forested areas, but for too long, drinking water has not been an ODF priority. As a result, the quality and quantity of drinking water is being seriously jeopardized by the current extreme rate of clearcutting.

For example, the drinking water source for Rockaway Beach is the Jetty Creek watershed. The steep slopes of that watershed have been extensively clearcut, including wetland areas and most of the feeder streams. After having been clearcut, the watershed was sprayed with pesticides multiple times.

Between 2004 and 2014, Rockaway Beach had to issue more drinking water violation alerts for total trihalomethanes (TTHM), a known carcinogen, than any other coastal community. This correlates to the same period where 83 percent of the watershed was clearcut and is directly related to increased turbidity of the source water.

Today, the Jetty Creek drinking watershed is severely compromised. In the past seventeen years, about 95 percent of it has been logged. According to Dr. Trygve Steen, an expert on forestry practices, it's reasonable to question whether Jetty Creek will be a viable water source for Rockaway Beach in the future.

My hope is that we can learn from what happened to the Jetty Creek watershed so that this sort of thing does not continue to happen to other communities. We need a Board of Forestry that is balanced and that will work to protect and restore our drinking water sources. Our future depends on healthy forests providing safe and abundant drinking water.

Thank you,

Nancy Webster PoBox 1291 (503-355-2516)
Rockaway Beach, Oregon 97136