

Greetings Chair Wagner and committee members. My name is Vanessa. I live in Portland, and I am testifying today in support of the current slate of nominees for the Oregon Board of Forestry.

Over the past year, the effects of global climate change have been witnessed firsthand as wildfires raged across the state, forcing families from their homes and churning pollutants into the air of the entire Pacific Northwest region. Not only do we need to address these urgent symptoms of the climate crisis, but we need a fully staffed Board of Forestry to transform the way Oregon forests are managed, in order to pave the way for progressive policy that heals our forests and contributes real solutions to a global environmental emergency. The forests of Oregon are unique in that they offer the greatest potential for sequestering atmospheric carbon, as shown through a recent study from the OSU College of Forestry. These findings position the Oregon Department of Forestry to take meaningful strides in protecting our forests, restoring our natural resources, and combating climate change.

However, even while Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-04 pushed for a more urgent response from the Oregon Department of Forestry in preparing for the impacts of climate change, the ODF and the Board of Forestry have not significantly improved our management of forested lands nor have they implemented meaningful changes in the state's logging operations. Current industrial logging practices permitted by the Board contribute to watershed contamination, drier droughts, and more extreme wildfires, significantly worsening the already extreme symptoms of climate change. Additionally, half of the seats on the Board of Forestry have sat vacant for over a year as past nominees have been silently rejected by the committee, preventing any movement towards implementing real change and addressing the many crises our forests and communities continue to face.

The current slate of nominees must be passed so that we can begin to work towards fulfilling the governor's demand for real change. And this need for change is long overdue. Our forests and our communities have suffered while board nominees have been quietly turned away. Indigenous land treaties have been disregarded and endangered wildlife has been increasingly put at risk. The current slate of nominees represents a shift towards sustainable values that promote a push towards conservation advocacy and equitable treatment of the land. Even while the logging industry continues to maintain representation within the Board of Forestry and the current nominees, approving this slate would favor an ecologically-minded approach towards climate mitigation. The decision-makers tasked with managing our forest policies need the approval of this committee in order to start addressing the effects of recent wildfires and start preparing for the impending environmental repercussions of the upcoming dry season. You must show your support for a fully functioning Board of Forestry by approving the current slate of nominees, so that real climate-oriented policy change can be implemented starting today.

Thank you members of the committee for your consideration.