

To Senator Golden, Chair, Vice Chair Senator Heard, and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

I am Professor Trygve Steen. I reside in Multnomah county. My background involved 12 years of post-high school education, including a Ph.D. from Yale University. I have spent over 45 years teaching courses in forest ecology and the principle of sustainability at Portland State University and have done region wide documentation of forest management on Federal, State, and private lands. I have also done in depth study of Oregon Department of Forestry logging practices and the damaging consequences of some of their operations.

I strongly support this effort to move the State Board of Forestry in a direction that makes its operation more balanced and less of a proponent for the excesses of industrial forestry in Oregon. More adequate attention needs to be paid to the ecological, social, and water related consequences of present business as usual in Oregon's forests. To that end I support the limitation of the number of board members with significant economic ties to the timber industry. Having only one member representing large operations is an important step toward moving regulation of forest management away from its present, limiting economic focus. I also support the specific goal of having a board member who can represent the issues that smaller forest operations face.

I strongly object to eliminating the sitting committees. An appropriate array of sitting committees could offer an important formal opportunity to bring additional geographic and technical insight to the board, including the views of the environmental community. Having industry representatives in this mode would be a route to provide input and insight from industry, without the power to control policy. This is an important alternative to simple elimination.

In my view, control over hiring and discharging the State Forester needs to be a collaborative process involving the Board of Forestry and the Governor. Adding the governor to this process can provide important political and general policy inputs. Having the Governor be the sole decider is risky in my view, because this important position needs to be beyond political. The State Forester position needs continuity, because forest management needs to be done with a long view.

Thanks again for your energy in relation to improving how the State Board of Forestry can be set up so that forest management in Oregon can be able to contribute to Oregon's positive reputation for environmentally responsible actions. Oregon's forest practices desperately need to be moved in the directions of better stream and watershed protections, improved capacity to sequester carbon dioxide by growing older trees, better protections for forest soils, as well as to better protect both general and genetic biodiversity. State forests are being run too close to the industrial model, which puts too much of Oregon's forests in an intensive really experimental paradigm. I feel that state forests need to provide a protective anchor by being run on longer rotation cycles than the way the aggressive management of private forests is done.