

**Written Testimony of Lori C. Williams, Oregon resident,
Before the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural
Resources Hearing, scheduled on March 17, 2021
Regarding SB 335-2**

I am submitting testimony in favor of SB 335-2, Senator Golden's bill to revise governance of the Department of Forestry. The bill provides a number of reforms long needed by Oregon's Forestry Department that will improve the operation of the department and help it meet critical conservation goals.

First it reduces the number of members who can have conflict of interest due to ties to the timber industry from the current 3 of 7 down to 2 of 7. It also requires that small woodland owners be represented and defines the income level that creates a conflict as \$1000. This would ensure a more balanced Board and minimize conflicts of interest.

Second, it gives the Governor the power to hire and fire the State Forester. Currently it requires a majority of the Board of Forestry to make that decision, with no formal role for the Governor. Given the increasing importance of forests to both wildfire and climate change, it makes sense to make the position more responsive to an elected official.

Finally, the bill eliminates the Regional Forest Practices Act Committees. There are three of these standing committees that are controlled by people with strong ties to timber production. There are no such committees for conservation interests and again balance is critical.

Passage of this bill will improve the operation and ability of the Department of Forestry to accomplish a wide range of goals, including those related to conservation, climate change and wildfire risk reduction.

Sincerely,
Lori C. Williams