

3/18/2021

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

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 335, which seeks to reconstitute the Board of Forestry, change the hiring and reporting practice for the State Forester, and eliminate regional forest practice committees.

What are you thinking? This question is only partly rhetorical.

Starting with the issue of regional forest practices: Oregon's geography, landscape, and flora and fauna are fantastically diverse, thriving in differing climates, benefiting from differing kinds of care. Regionally based committees are a vital part of coming to understand best practices in a particular bio-region.

Moving to the state forester: No governor can possibly be expected to be an expert in every field in which the state has an interest. Since a governor will have to consult with experts in hiring a state forester, why make the process less transparent?

Finally, the Board of Forestry: Seriously? This doesn't even look like a thinly-veiled attack on forestry and the wood products industry—it's right out in the open. The Board of Forestry needs foresters on it. Woodland owners (like me; just shy of 40 acres, all of which burned in the Holiday Farm Fire) would be a nice additional voice, but not taking the place of a professional. And expertise and professionalism often go together. \$1000 is not much in the world of forestry or wood products and does not mean that someone is in the pocket of an evil entity.

Will all expert advisers in Oregon be limited to \$1000 of income in their field? What about legislators? Or are the rules in place for legislators sufficient to avoid undue influence?

Why this bill is moving forward raises many more questions than the concerns it seeks to address. Unfortunately, if adopted, a bill that looks like a bad joke could harm all of us who love our beautifully forested state.

Thank you for including this testimony in your deliberations.

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