

March 18, 2021

Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery Committee

RE: SB 335

Chair Senator Golden, Vice-Chair Senator Heard and members of the committee,

My name is Mike Barsotti. I am a family forest landowner in the Lyons area, a forester, past president of Oregon Small Woodlands Association, and have our forest certified under the internationally recognized American Tree Farm System's Standards of Sustainability.

I oppose all three components of SB 335 and its -3 amendments.

I care deeply about the health and sustainability of my forest and all of Oregon's forests. These forests provide such a broad array of products and values for landowners and all Oregonians.

To have healthy, sustainable forests, policies need to find the balance between the economic, social, and ecological products and values forests provide. Forests are complex; and therefore, balancing these three legs of sustainability is also a complex process. As stated in the Board of Forestry's Forestry Program for Oregon, this balance differs by ownership class, and it is in looking holistically at all ownership categories that we can achieve the desired outcomes.

Private forests provide more of the economic components of sustainability. Federal, state, county, and tribal forests all have different mixes of social, ecological and economic components. Setting forest policy for private forests need a broad understand of the economic components these forests provide, and a diverse forestry related representation on the Board is important.

Board of Forestry membership: Managing forests is complex and differs by ecological regions; Oregon has nine. No one individual can represent forestry for all regions, nor can one individual represent all aspects of forestry in one ecological region or adequately represent all ownership categories. Limiting the Board to just two does not provide adequate forestry expertise on the Board of Forestry.

Why is expertise linked to bias? Throughout the history of the Board, it is difficult to find where forest representation has led to biased policies that favor forest landowner. In 1971 a Board of Forest driven effort made Oregon the first state to establish a Forest Practices Act to regulate activities on private forest. At this time the Board makeup was predominately made up of individuals representing forestry. Expertise and bias is not one and the same.

Regional Forest Practices Act Committees: As stated above, Oregon has nine distinct ecological regions. In addition, the social and economic forestry related components in the different parts of Oregon differ greatly. Having foresters in different regions address issues before the Board to provide valuable information as to how changes to the Forest Practices Act will affect the

forests by region is important. I see no valid reason to change a system that has served the Board since the early 1970s.

Governor shall appoint a State Forester: To provide healthy, sustainable outcomes science, not politics, should drive forest policy in Oregon. Efforts to balance the social, ecological, and economic products and values our forests provide are difficult. Having the Governor appoint the State Forester moves politics, not science, to the forefront in how Oregon set forest policy.

I can recall Governors Bob Straub and John Kitzhaber come before the Board to argue their concerns on forestry related issues. Governors represent the citizens of Oregon, but their job description does not include the complex task of balancing the components of forest sustainability.

Oregon's population is becoming more and more urban and this urban populations plays a major role in who is elected governor. How urban Oregonians view its forests should not be equated with a balanced view of forest sustainability.

Providing a level of separation between politics and science when setting forest policy has served Oregon well and should be maintained.

In summary, forest policy needs to balance the social, ecological and economic components of forest sustainability, and SB 335 undermines this. Please reject all three parts of this bill.