



Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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March 25, 2021

The Honorable Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: SB 541 (**SUPPORT**)

Chair Beyer, Vice Chair Findley and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Amanda Astor. I am here on behalf of the Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL) as their forest policy manager. AOL is the statewide trade association and voice of Oregon's forest operators, based in Salem. I am a forester with undergraduate degrees in forest management, forest biology and a graduate certificate in forest carbon: science, policy and management. I am a leader in Oregon Women in Timber, Oregon Society of American Foresters, Lane Families for Farms and Forests, and the Lane County Climate Advisory Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my professional forestry perspective and the voice of nearly 22,000 forest operators that I represent, about the necessity to address the climate crisis in this state and the role active forest management plays in our success.

AOL believes recognizing the roll that forests and waters play in the carbon cycle, as SB 541 does, is vitally important when discussing the ability for Oregon to meet its carbon reduction goals identified in ORS 468A.205.

Not only do forests sequester and store carbon, but when sustainably managed that carbon benefit can be enhanced.

In this day and age, the value of maximizing carbon benefits should be prioritized through active management rather than antiquated reserve systems that seek to simplify the role of forests to mere carbon storage areas.

[Leaving forests alone may seem beneficial to optimize carbon storage, but new research suggests sustainably managing and harvesting forests substantially improves carbon mitigation outcomes.](#)

The best uses of wood provide a “carbon negative technology” with the ability to displace fossil emissions. In short, simply planting more trees, then walking away is not enough. We must also harvest and use the wood to optimize the climate change benefits.

To get net negative carbon outputs from forests, trees **must** be harvested and subsequently replanted which is already required by Oregon's Forest Practices Act.

When forests are properly managed, the carbon negative utility of wood products is realized. The wood products industry is improving this potential through innovation as well. [Engineered wood](#)

[has been around for half of a century but has been gaining a lot of attention lately](#). Products such as cross laminated timber (CLT), I-joists, and glulam beams [help reduce the need for carbon intensive non-renewable building materials](#) like steel and concrete. [New research from Yale](#) shows when these wood innovations are used through construction in cities, our urban environments can act as carbon sinks that are long-lived.

Milwaukee, WI has acknowledged this opportunity and is preparing to construct a [25-story mass timber building for residential apartments](#) sometime in the summer of 2022. Oregon can be a leader in this technology as well, especially because we have [the most engineered wood plants](#) in all of the United States. We grow, mill and engineer the wood in Oregon. We should also be maximizing its use here in Oregon.

As demand for these products increases, policy makers should empower Oregon's forest sector in its roll to help reduce carbon from our atmosphere as SB 541 requires. Increased demand creates economic incentives to better manage our forests and to continue developing innovative technologies. The more restrictions and red tape we put on forest managers and operators, the harder it will be to see any positive change to Oregon's climate challenges.

We must recognize the role that active forest management, forest products, building with engineered wood and the greater timber industry play in attaining Oregon's carbon reduction goals. This work has already begun at the Oregon Department of Forestry, but would benefit from a more comprehensive life cycle assessment, a recognition of substitution factors, an acknowledgement of current law and policy that ensures forests are seen as more than a place to store carbon. Oregon's ability to achieve of climate goals depends on it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 541. I am available for any questions you may have.

Graciously,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Astor', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Amanda Astor (she/her/hers)
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Forest Policy Manager
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