

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee of Natural Resources

I was unable to testify in person at yesterday's hearing on SB 335, but I would like to submit the following written testimony.

My wife and I are retired and live on our rural forested property. We have been active in small woodland management for many years. We are very concerned about this bill!!

We have always been proud of Oregon's treatment of small woodland owners, and of the state's common-sense laws and regulations for management of forest land. However, we see that trust being eroded significantly, and this bill is prime evidence. It reduces the eligibility of citizens with practical forestry experience from serving on the seven member Oregon Board of Forestry. Current statute states no more than three members of the Board may receive any significant portion of their income from the forest products industry. SB 335 would reduce representation from the forest products industry to no more than two members, and require that if two members meet this requirement, at least one must represent small forest landowners (no more than 5,000 acres).

The bill goes further away from common-sense as it would eliminate the three Regional Forest Practice Committees (Northwest, Southwest and Eastern regions), which are panels of citizens that advise the Oregon Board of Forestry on current forestry issues and forest management approaches.

Another significant problem with the bill is that it politicizes sound, scientifically based forest management by putting the Governor in charge of hiring and firing the State Forester. Currently the Board of Forestry holds this role, whose Board members are already appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

To sum it up, this bill is regulation without sufficient representation. The Board's seven members make pivotal decision on management activities that are critical to the success of our rural businesses and the communities they support throughout Oregon. It is impossible for the Board to adequately review and vote on regulations without the benefit of on-the-ground, practical knowledge of how those regulations will impact the many foresters, loggers and landowners who work in the woods every day. Most states and most Oregon boards and commissions require significant representation from the profession or industry regulated.

Please consider these points and do not pass SB 335.

Thank you for your consideration.

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