

SB 5518 Testimony

Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Committee, my name is Dave Bugni and I live in Clackamas County.

My wife and I are retired, own 84 acres of forestland, for almost 30 years we have proudly stewarded our forest, and in 2020 we were honored for our efforts as our county's Woodland Farmer of the Year.

Today I am representing the Oregon Small Woodlands Association. We are currently neutral on SB 5518; however, if the proposed cost shift in the ODF Private Forest division occurs, which would result in a 25% additional cost burden to private woodland owners in the form of a higher Forest Products Harvest Tax to administer the Forest Practices Act, then we are opposed to this bill.

The following points demonstrate why the current 60%/40% cost share between the General Fund and those of us who pay a harvest tax should be maintained and not changed to a 50%/50% ratio:

The ODF presentation you recently saw about their budget indicated how the private forestlands division provides value to the general public in terms of enforcement of the Forest Practices Act, forest health measures, and urban and community forestry programs. While these programs are a benefit to woodland owners, they benefit the public in greater measure by helping to ensure the safer and healthier forests that all of us need for water, air and wildlife, among other things. All of this requires a greater proportion of ODF's workload be directed towards these public benefits.

Additionally, it is highly likely that additional costs will be borne by woodland owners due to the evolving Private Forests Accord; therefore, it will be extremely onerous to combine those undetermined costs with a significant increase in the harvest tax.

In closing, please maintain the current and fair 60%/40% ratio between public and private interests to fund this division of ODF.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. Any questions?