

May 25, 2021

To: Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 868

My wife and I live on our 40-acre tree farm in western Washington County, about 7 miles from Banks.

I worked for ODF for 31 years and retired in 2005. During that time, I worked under two very effective State Foresters, Jim Brown and Doug Decker. Both worked well with their respective Boards to meet the department's mission.

Senate Bill 868 is trying to fix something that is not broken – how the State Forester is appointed. The issue to be addressed is why, over the past decade, the Board of Forestry has underperformed.

Hopefully the new Board Chair and reconstituted Board can select a State Forester who has the vision and leadership skills exhibited by both Jim and Doug.

Personally, I believe part of the problem is who the seven members of the Board represent. The current Board of Forestry only has one family woodland owner who manages 1,300 acres. Collectively small landowners manage 36% of the private forestland in Oregon and, according to ODF, the average ownership size is less than 40 acres. A future Board member should represent private woodland owners who have 10-40 acres and who live on their forest. Their perspective would be relevant not only because they live under the threat of wildfire, but that for most, timber harvest is not a primary goal.