

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

SOCAN

Confronting Climate Change

<https://socan.eco>

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February 26th 2023

Reference SB795

Chair Golden and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources

I write as cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN), an organization of over 2,000 rural Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and urge statewide action to address it. The mission of SOCAN is to promote awareness and understanding of the science of global warming and its climate chaos consequences and stimulate individual and collective action to address it. Since rural Oregonians occupy the frontlines in experiencing the impact of the drought, shrinking snowpack, wildfires and extreme weather that the climate crisis imposes, we are strongly committed to statewide action.

I write today to oppose Senate Bill 795.

Just as Federal lands (National Parks and Recreation Areas, National Forests and BLM land) belong to the people of the United States, not just the residents of a single state, so State lands belong to the people of the state, not just the residents of a single county. The notion that such land should be transferred to a county if the County Commissioners request it stands in stark contrast to the basic principle identified above. Additionally, as the state seeks to address its climate pollution reduction goals by promoting carbon sequestration on our Natural and Working Lands, it makes no sense to convey state forests where this could be undertaken to counties where other priorities (see below) might apply.

As residents of rural Southern Oregon, we are well aware that County Boards of Commission members are not always fully accepting of consensus science. In the case of climate science, this leads the state towards promoting natural climate solutions of the type indicated above. Historically, states have established state agencies because legislators are not necessarily experts in the many areas over which legislatures have influence. In the case of forestry, Oregon has a State Department of Forestry staffed by such experts. Counties, on the other hand, do not have the financial capacity to hire experts to staff a forestry or even a natural resources department. Assigning authority to manage forests that belong to the people of Oregon to county commissioners who mostly have no expertise in forest or fire management, even

though they may think they do, would be a calamitous way to consign our state forests to mismanagement and destruction.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that many rural counties find themselves constrained financially. Given the behavior of many counties in responding to this by encouraging logging, it seems highly likely that many counties would define Greatest Permanent Value in their county as logging these forests, thus not only releasing sequestered carbon into our atmosphere, but also precluding the application of natural climate carbon sequestration programs currently being developed by state agencies. The problem that county coffers are dependent on logging is a problem that should be addressed but this is not the way to address it. A timber harvest or severance tax with some portion of proceeds returned to counties would be a much more rational approach.

Please oppose SB795!

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Journet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Alan Journet