

Submitter: Roberta Cade

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB795

For decades, Oregon's rural counties have wisely utilized sustainable timber harvests from state forests in their communities to balance their budgets. In addition to producing thousands of family-wage jobs and economic stability, timber dollars help pay for teachers, police officers, firefighters, infrastructure investments, health care, road maintenance and other critical services on which the public depends. That source of critical funding is now under threat.

Several anti-timber activist groups are proposing to take away that revenue from the counties. They claim that "decoupling" timber harvests and county budgets will prevent local officials from having to choose between protecting the environment and funding public services. That's a false choice. Those who actually live around and work in the woods know we can and do protect the environment while producing valuable renewable building materials our society needs.

Proponents of this concept don't have a plan to replace the revenue for the counties. That is why they want to pass Senate Bill 90 to establish a lopsided "task force" heavily weighted with urban interests to recommend new revenue sources for rural counties – which is code for new taxes on our community.

Don't let activists decide what's best for rural Oregon. Even if the state could find money to replace the revenue provided to rural counties through timber harvests on state forests, a government handout will never truly replace a key economic driver in rural counties.