

Submitter: Angelita Sanchez
On Behalf Of: 60000 Working Oregonians
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB795

Committee Chair and Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Angelita Sanchez and I speak for more than 60,000 people, people who consist of hard working families who work the land. The passage of this bill is critical to retain the maximum amount of resources for our local rural counties and our rural school children. I implore you to support it.

It is critical to maintain proper forest management to protect us all from catastrophic wildfires. Governor Kate Brown agreed when she spoke on Face the Nation in September of 2020. She spoke of mismanaged government land, as well as Climate Change is to blame. As you recall the devastating wildfires that desecrated our lands in 2020, will happen again under state government control. And for a little back story, the canyon that I live in was not burned down, even though we were smack in the middle of the two canyons that burned, and do you know why? Our local county officials and our private party landowners worked hand in hand to protect our communities and lands. Every county deserves the same future, free from fear of fire and displacement.

Our rural neighbors and school children depend on these local family wage paying jobs and deserve a highly funded education. As you also know, Oregon ranks 44th in the education of our children. That is truly shameful. Many our rural children are marginalized by a lack of options and resources. They deserve an equitable future too within the rural public school system. And while the state touts that record revenues will be received and distributed from the common school fund this year, what we know this to be true, factually the counties lost billions in revenues, due to broken promises by the state. Found guilty by a jury, in a court of law.

Since the Elliott State Forest has already been removed as a revenue source for the school fund, moved now to be a research site for OSU, it is necessary to return control back to the individual counties. It's as if the state took advantage of a now forgotten group of people, a people group who they want to go away, a people group who they are trying to silence, a people group who are being burned out of their livelihoods, now only to feel as though their land has been stolen. Do not let history repeat itself. Returning it to the counties is the only right and legal thing to do now, return the land back to the county hands. They are capable of managing it appropriately and with the greatest permanent value in mind.

The forest is like a garden, if you do not prune, thin, harvest, maintain, it will never give its maximum return.

Angelita Sanchez
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Co-Director