

Submitter: Ken Adee

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB795

I oppose SB 795 for the following reasons:

Lack of expertise: County governments do not have the same level of expertise or resources as state agencies when it comes to managing forests. This will lead to issues with forest health and management practices, as well as compliance with environmental regulations. Before moving forward with such a simplistic bill, the counties should be required to document the resources and expertise necessary to effectively manage State Forest lands.

Conflicting priorities: County governments have different priorities than state agencies when it comes to managing forests. In spite of the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners language in their support, I believe they prioritize revenue generation over environmental conservation, which would lead to unsustainable forest management practices. This proposal is an attempt to undermine both 1) the Oregon Supreme Court decision in the appeal of the Linn County vs Oregon that affirms the the authority of the Oregon Board of Forestry to manage state forest and 2) the Habitat Conservation Plan's (HCP) compromise to protect multiple values, including timber harvest as well as clean water, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Rather than continuing the work to eke out an HCP compromise, SB 795 attempts to sidestep compromise. I just don't see that the counties will sufficiently support healthy water and biodiversity.

Funding limitations: Counties may not have sufficient funding to manage state forests effectively. This could result in deferred maintenance, inadequate staffing, or other issues that could impact the health of the forest ecosystem.

Reduced public oversight: Transferring management of Oregon State Forest land to the county level will likely reduce public oversight of forest management practices. This could make it more difficult for citizens and environmental groups to monitor and influence forest management decisions.

Legal challenges: Transferring management of Oregon State Forest lands to the county level will face legal challenges, particularly if the transfer conflicts with Oregon State or Federal environmental regulations or the Oregon Supreme Court decision re: the Linn County appeal that clearly assigns the authority of managing to the Oregon State Forests to the Oregon Board of Forestry.