

Submitted By: Joe Spendolini
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Testimony in support of: Senate Bill 795: Relating to state forest lands.
Submitted to: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Dear Chairman Golden and Members of the Committee,

I support Senate Bill 795 because it returns land previously owned by Oregon counties conveyed to the state by them in partnership to achieve and maintain, "the greatest permanent value".

In researching the number of trees per acre in healthy forests, depending on the source, that number varies from a low of 40 trees per acre to a high of 200.

According to data posted on the website "Oregonforests.org" from 2020, there is an average of 347 trees per acre in Oregon forests. This dense overgrowth places the communities where the forests are located, and the wildlife that relies on this habitat to survive, in jeopardy of disease, harmful infestations, and wildfires. All have been witnessed and experienced recently.

The Oregon counties that make up the trust made it clear in their lawsuit they aren't happy with how the arrangement has played out. An Oregon Jury agreed and awarded a settlement of over \$1 billion. That award was overturned on appeal and late last year the Oregon Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

SB 795 restores ownership of these forest lands back to the counties. In the hands of the counties that originally owned the forests before the partnership was formed with the state, will result in a higher level of forest management. This will ultimately lead to safer and healthier forests for Oregon citizens AND the wildlife that relies on them to survive.

Healthier forests are good for the air, water, wildlife, citizens, counties, and our beautiful state.

I respectfully encourage you to vote YES on SB 795.

Respectfully,

Joe Spendolini
Chairman, Klamath County Chamber of Commerce
Government Affairs Committee