



Marion County

OREGON

Board of Commissioners

February 27, 2023

(503) 588-5212
(503) 588-5237-FAX

Senator Jeff Golden, Chair
Senator Fred Girod, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources

RE: Marion County Supports SB 795

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Colm Willis, Chair
Kevin Cameron
Danielle Bethell

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Jan Fritz

Dear Senator Golden and Senator Girod and Members of the Committee:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners support SB 795, which would allow counties to request that the State Board of Forestry convey state forest lands based on the determination that the county would secure the greatest permanent value.

The 2020 Beachie Creek wildfire devastated our communities in the North Santiam Canyon. We believe that much of that damage could have been prevented or mitigated had the forests been more locally managed. Allowing local control over forest lands located in the county allows real time management and decision making that is critical to those communities. SB 795 allows counties to act in a manner that supports the communities to the maximum benefit of all, including the forest land. Not only will the county have the responsibility to manage its lands as needed, but it will reduce the burden of the state to be overseeing and working all these areas at once.

SB 795 also allows counties to have more control over the financial viability of the communities by giving more direct decision making over timber harvest in their areas of operation. A large portion of the proceeds of these sales go to supporting critical public services like fire departments, community colleges, healthcare centers, emergency response, libraries, recreation centers, and K-12 school districts. The funding for these services is critical to giving the residents of rural communities in our county an equal opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for continued work to support our communities. The Marion County Board of Commissioners urges the committee to votes yes on SB 795.

Sincerely,

Colm Willis
Chair

Kevin Cameron
Commissioner

Danielle Bethell
Commissioner

BOC: AMK