

Submitter: Glenn Roger Dorband
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure: SB1593

I am writing to urge you to do all you can to get SB1593 passed as written by Senator Golden and supporters of the bill. Ever since the elimination of the severance tax on the timber industry they have been taking massive profits out of Oregon with very little recompense in the form of taxes. Through lobbying in the years after the severance tax was eliminated they continued to craft a sweetheart tax structure for themselves that has attracted Wall Street investment funds who now own over 35 % of the total forest land in Oregon. Their practice of clearcutting trees in the 25-40 year old range has rendered Oregon, a once green state, into a colony of China and South Korea the main importers of Oregon timber. Meanwhile the massive profits from industrial harvesting are never seen in the state instead going to CEOs living elsewhere and dividends for their investors.

Now western forests are faced with the ever increasing devastation from wildfires, primarily attributable to global warming. There has been alot of discussion about how to deal with the situation both from the standpoint of prevention and cost for cleanup. Recently ecologist George Wuerthner has collated statistics on how wildfire get started. Two primary findings jump our from his report. Humans cause over 80% of the fires and clearcutting and logging roads play a major role.

SB1503 does a lot to balance the wildfire cost, shifting much of that cost to the timber companies which seems only fair considering the wealth they derive from the forests and the new information regarding their industry's contribution to the problem. SB 1593 also helps to rectify the long standing problem of funding for the ODF and the counties. Having those monies come from industrial logging on state land is no longer a viable plan considering the limited amount of state forest land (3% of the total forestland in the state) and the massive amount of clearcutting that has already taken place on state land. Those very necessary funds can come from a tax on timber harvest as put forth in SB1539.