



OREGON FOREST  
INDUSTRIES COUNCIL



STATE FOREST  
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Action Network

# GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR ODF

LC 110



## THE SITUATION

### Data Inaccuracies and Obscure Processes Leave the Public Guessing

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is tasked with managing **745,000 acres of state forestland for the benefit of all Oregonians**. Many stakeholders – often with conflicting objectives – actively participate in ODF and the Board of Forestry’s public processes for rulemaking and long-term forest management decisions.

- Businesses, both small and large, plan investments in infrastructure and jobs based on ODF’s harvest projections.
- Counties and local taxing districts depend on stable and reliable projections for planning and delivering critical public services.

State forest management decisions can be controversial and highly charged, but it’s critical all stakeholders – including ODF staff and Board of Forestry members – have access to accurate, timely and informative data and an inclusive, transparent process.

**Unfortunately, ODF has struggled for two decades to provide accurate and dependable data. Stakeholders are frustrated at the lack of transparency in the agency’s processes and projections.**



In 2018 the Board of Forestry advanced development of a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) based on modeling data showing it would provide **247 million board feet** of timber annually and increase over time. After years of development, those early projections turned out to be inaccurate. 2023 projections show harvest levels would be **165-182.5 million board feet**, which missed the mark by roughly 30 percent.

Stakeholders have voiced concerns during the process that data and information isn’t available with enough time to provide ample feedback to ODF, resulting in an increasing amount of public testimony at Board of Forestry meetings and inadequate opportunity for the public to have concerns and questions addressed.

This creates questions about ODF’s own financial viability, and creates budgetary concerns and uncertainty for 15 counties and over 200 local taxing districts that rely on state timber harvest revenue, including schools, colleges, emergency services, law enforcement and others. This uncertainty causes fears about the long-term stability of jobs, local businesses, social services and the general rural economy.

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## THE SOLUTION

**Improve Inventory Data and Modeling, Increase Transparency and Implement Accountability Mechanisms**

Given the importance of accurate and timely information for both decision-making and long-term planning of the Department's own budget as well as communities and businesses that depend on state timber harvests, the following steps would improve ODF's processes:

- Develop verifiable inventory data and modeling tools to accurately assess and forecast forest inventory management scenarios to:
  - Calculate and make publicly available a sustainable harvest level every five years.
  - Model harvest outcomes and make publicly available the metrics used to determine those outcomes.
- Provide publicly available updated harvest levels before ODF implements changes that impact those harvest levels, or if they make changes to long-term planning policies
- Develop a plan to offer timber sales to make up for a shortfall should, for any reason, ODF not meet its sustainable harvest target.
- Identify and implement remedies in response to prolonged shortfalls.



**In summary, the solution directs ODF to create quality data and reliable projections using professional standards for quality modeling, show their work and regularly true-up harvest levels.**