

County Commissioners
Kevin Cameron, Chair
Danielle Bethell
Colm Willis



Chief Administrative Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 20, 2024

Representative Ken Helm, Chair
Representative Annessa Hartman, Vice-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Vice-Chair
Members of the Committee

Subject: Marion County Supports HB 4106

Dear Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes to express our support for HB 4106. This bill is crucial for addressing the negative impacts that the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) will have on Oregon counties, particularly in terms of annual revenue and community well-being.

The proposed HCP, crafted by the Oregon Department of Forestry, aims to protect species under the federal Endangered Species Act by creating protected habitat across approximately 640,000 acres of Oregon state forests. While conservation efforts are undoubtedly important, the implementation of this plan is poised to significantly reduce timber revenue for counties across Oregon, causing alarm among local leaders, which would create a substantial blow to essential services such as police, schools, and social services. This reduction in revenue would exacerbate existing challenges faced by rural communities and could have profound implications for their economic stability and residents' well-being.

HB 4106 offers a vital solution by directing the State Forester to establish sustainable harvest levels for timber on state forestland. By developing a timber inventory model and offering timber for sale at sustainable harvest levels, the bill aims to mitigate the financial impacts of the HCP while ensuring responsible forest management practices. Additionally, the bill provides mechanisms for addressing any shortfalls in timber sales, thereby safeguarding counties' revenue streams and promoting long-term fiscal stability.

It is imperative that the Oregon Legislature approves House Bill 4106 to protect the interests of counties and communities that rely on timber revenue for their livelihoods. We urge you to consider the significant consequences of the proposed HCP on local economies and support measures that strike a balance between conservation and sustainable forestry practices.

Sincerely,


Kevin Cameron Danielle Bethell Colm Willis
Chair Commissioner Commissioner