

Submitter: Chris Dodge

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3103

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 3103 and its amendments. This bill prioritizes timber harvest above all other values on our state forests and undermines critical protections for fish and wildlife. By requiring the state forester to set timber harvest targets by rule, HB 3103 would subordinate all other plans, policies, and directives from the Board of Forestry, including those protecting fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation.

In particular, HB 3103 undermines the newly developed State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which provides balanced protection for 17 species of salmon and wildlife listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is currently following the guidelines of the HCP while awaiting final approval by federal agencies. However, HB 3103 would prohibit ODF from using the HCP until it is approved, leaving protected habitats vulnerable to clearcutting. Given the potential delays in federal approval due to staffing cuts from the previous administration, this could leave critical habitats unprotected for years.

This bill also prevents the implementation of Oregon's Climate Change and Carbon Plan, adopted by the Board of Forestry in 2021. The Climate Plan aims to position Oregon as a national leader in climate-smart forestry, with a focus on increasing carbon storage in state forests. HB 3103 would impose rigid harvest targets that would preempt the goals of the Climate Plan and undermine efforts to address climate change.

As a lifelong resident of Oregon, I strongly urge you to reject this bill. Instead, I ask the committee to focus on policies that promote climate resilience, protect critical wildlife habitats, and safeguard our public resources for future generations.

Please do not allow this bill to pass out of committee. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Chris Dodge