

Submitter: Tara Britten

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 respectfully express my opposition to House Bill 3103 and its accompanying amendments. This legislation, which primarily benefits the timber industry, poses a significant threat to the integrity of the state's Habitat Conservation Plan. If enacted, it would likely lead to increased clearcutting, an uptick in litigation, diminished habitat for salmon and wildlife, and reduced carbon storage capacity within our forests.

I urge you to consider the following critical questions: Can we ensure the protection of our waterways and the cleanliness of our drinking water? Can we guarantee that native animal habitats will remain unharmed? What will happen to all the displaced animals? Can you assure us that this is in the best interests of everyone involved, rather than just for financial gain?

The Habitat Conservation Plan is intended to provide balanced protection for 17 species of salmon and wildlife listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. However, this bill risks harming essential native plants and displacing numerous animal and bird species that are vital for the proper functioning of their ecosystems. We must remember that we rely on these ecosystems to thrive and survive.

It is imperative that we emphasize sustainable forestry practices that involve responsible timber harvesting and replanting initiatives. Before endorsing this bill, I encourage you to ensure that adequate protections are established, allowing us to maintain clean waterways for future generations alongside sustainable logging practices.

Humans have significantly altered our natural environment, yet we possess the intelligence and adaptability to thrive within our current limitations instead of continuing to exploit resources to the detriment of our ecosystems. A balanced approach—one that fosters both environmental stewardship and economic viability—is essential.

I implore you to consider opposing this bill and instead advocate for initiatives that enhance carbon storage within our state forests and safeguard our invaluable public resources for our children and future generations. By collaboratively setting aside our differences, we can identify solutions that achieve this balance.

Please do not allow this bill to progress out of committee without the necessary safeguards and protective measures for those who reside in forested areas. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Tara Rae Britten