

Submitter: Kyle Collins

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3103

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 3103 and its amendments. This bill appears to be wholly drafted by representatives of the timber industry, with little thought to other perspectives and the benefits that come from intact forested landscapes, particularly those with mature and old growth trees. Our largely intact forests, including those which are managed for timber resources in a balanced manner, preserve critical water supplies for our communities, provide habitat for imperiled wildlife populations, and will increasingly be important as carbon sequestration sites as the climate continues to warm. As written currently, this bill undermines nearly all of the successful components of the Western Oregon state forest habitat conservation plan and appear as little more than an attempt to increase clear-cuts to squeeze additional profit for small groups of individuals at the expense of all residents of the state. Increasing harvest on these lands in such a manner will inevitably pollute our waterways with more runoff impacts, increase stream temperatures, and provide even less habitat for salmon and wildlife. Additionally, previous research and experience in our region continue to demonstrate that clear-cut lands actually increase wildfire risk for communities as accumulating slash piles and dense plantation style forests that spring up in their wake provide the provide conditions for drought stressed vegetation and quick spread to canopy fires. We need to begin managing our forests holistically, in a way that take into account the resilience of larger trees and intact forest to actually slow and/or prevent wildfires, while taking steps to thin young, overstocked plantations that exacerbated fires like those in September 2020, such as the Holiday Farm Fire. Timber production will continue to be a crucial part of our local economy, but we must take steps to modern this industry, rather than revert to old management practices which will harm Oregon in the medium and long term.

I urge you to oppose this bill and encourage this committee to focus on measures that would safeguard our public resources for water supply/quality, wildlife habitat, and carbon storage.

Please do not let this bill pass out of committee.

Sincerely,  
Kyle Collins  
Bend, OR 97701