

Submitter: Dave Kunert

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3103

My name is Dave Kunert, I am the VP of Resources for Hampton Lumber and I live in Tillamook. I am testifying in support of HB 3103 and the dash 1 amendment. This bill would provide the transparency and accountability all Oregonians need from the Department of Forestry.

I started my career in forestry ~30 years ago as an ODF employee in the roads department on the Tillamook District. After joining Hampton, I have built a career working alongside ODF staff as a purchaser of ODF timber sales for the company. Over the decades, I have developed immense respect for the folks working in the local office, but remain frustrated that agency leadership too frequently overpromises and under-delivers.

Going all the way back to 2001, ODF told the public that the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests could annually produce 279 MMBF, but after Board of Forestry approval, management plans unexpectedly dropped the harvest levels to 176 MMBF. That was my first experience in this building, wearing this exact button, pleading with the legislature to direct ODF to do better.

Then in 2006, ODF promised to raise annual harvest levels for those two state forests to 213 MMBF, but we were sold short again at 184 MMBF.

And in 2018, this trend continued with the development of a habitat conservation plan that ODF originally said could annually produce 247 MMBF of timber, with harvest levels increasing over time – but now ODF is only planning for 182 MMBF for the entire state forest land base which includes much more than just the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests.

ODF's failure to produce the volume they promised has come at the expense of rural Oregonians and timber-dependent communities. Those of us whose businesses and budgets depend on state forests have been asking ODF for years to explain how this keeps happening – it's been tough to get a straight answer.

Likewise, overstating projected harvest prior to placing new restrictions on the forest downplays the price of those new restrictions. If you find out new rules are much more costly only after adoption, it's very difficult to unring the bell. It would be better if we knew in advance, and if the agency had some incentive to get those projections right.

All we're asking for from this bill is for ODF to tell us what they plan to harvest and the ability to hold them accountable to their plans. This is a simple request that most employers expect from their employees, and ODF should be no different.

Make no mistake – my boss holds me to a very similar standard. For Hampton lands, I am asked to project harvest levels, and I am expected to manage to that standard. The only difference here is that ODF's boss is the Oregon public.

I ask that you support this common sense, good governance bill.