



Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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March 26, 2025

The Honorable Kayse Jama, Chair
Senate Committee On Rules
Oregon State Capitol; Salem, OR 97301

Subject: SJR 28 - **OPPOSE**

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Amanda Sullivan-Astor, I am a certified forester, and I serve as the forest policy manager for Associated Oregon Loggers. We represent nearly 23,000 Oregonians that sustainably manage, transport, steward, and protect Oregon's forests. This includes wildland firefighters, tree planters, loggers, road builders and more. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Joint Resolution 28 of which we have significant concerns.

We understand and share the aspirations expressed in this resolution. Clean water, healthy forests, abundant wildlife, and fresh air are not abstract ideals to us—they are daily motivations and essential to our work and way of life. Our members live in the communities they serve. Their kids fish in these rivers. Their homes are surrounded by the forests they manage. Their livelihoods depend on Oregon's environment remaining healthy and resilient for generations.

Oregon's forest sector, including our members, works within one of the most regulated natural resource frameworks in the nation. Our practices are guided by the Oregon Forest Practices Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other strong federal and state environmental safeguards.

Associated Oregon Loggers also manages the Oregon Professional Logger program, ensuring our workforce meets the highest standards of environmental and safety performance.

Yet, SJR 28 introduces legal uncertainty that threatens the stability and effectiveness of this science-based system.

This proposed constitutional amendment would allow any individual to file lawsuits against the state—or effectively, against agencies, businesses, and communities—based on subjective definitions of what constitutes “harm” to public natural resources. No degree in forestry, no understanding of watersheds, no familiarity with wildlife management would be necessary to bring a claim. Nor would it require legislative direction or public process. And because the resolution is self-executing and provides for attorney fees to the prevailing party, it creates a powerful incentive to litigate rather than collaborate.

That presents a major risk to our member companies, particularly small businesses who operate on thin margins and are already subject to rigorous environmental oversight. SJR 28 opens the door to second-guessing by courts and judges likely do not have expertise in natural resource management. A judge ruling on what constitutes “substantial impairment” of an ecosystem without training in forestry, hydrology, or other natural science is not sound public policy. Nor is forcing public agencies and small businesses to defend good-faith, science-based decisions in court, simply because someone disagrees with the outcome. Often our member companies or other business intervene on these cases that affect their ability to do business or file amicus briefs to back up highly educated and qualified public servants.

Imagine if every building permit or transportation project in your district could be halted or delayed not because of regulatory non-compliance, but because someone claims—without scientific basis—that it could impair the

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environment. That's the risk SJR 28 poses to rural Oregonians working in forests and mills across the state. Plaintiffs don't even have to live in the communities for which they file lawsuits. This isn't about avoiding accountability—it's about preserving the clarity, trust, and balance that our regulatory system already provides.

We agree, Oregon's environment must be protected for future generations. But this resolution undermines the very framework that has helped our state lead in sustainable practices. Let's strengthen trust in science, in qualified professionals, and in the collaborative governance model that brings public, private, and nonprofit actors together.

We respectfully urge your opposition to SJR 28.

Thank you for your time and for considering the voices of Oregon's forest professionals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Sullivan-Astor', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Amanda Sullivan-Astor, CF

Forest Policy Manager; Associated Oregon Loggers

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