

Submitter: Jake Freeland
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2817

Chair, I am Jake Freeland, and I am in opposition of bill HB 2817. This bill seeks to remove permit closures from the main avenues that the State of Oregon goes about in closing areas of Oregon/forests of Oregon due to fire danger. This would leave the state two options for the closure of forests: Absolute Closures, and Regulated Closures. Absolute closures involved a complete shutdown of the area, and are often implemented in situations where active wildfires are burning through forests. Regulated closures, while similar to permit closures, differ in that they are mostly related to public safety, and are often used for accidents or potential hazards, not necessarily linked to fire dangers. Permit closures are essential because they require the state to post when and why areas are closing, and require newspapers to cover the incidents. This means the public is educated, and given opportunities to learn about wildfire danger. Those in favor of this bill argue that it will lead to less administrative work for the state, which while true, doesn't exactly matter. The State exists to serve the public and its forests, and permit closures specifically relate to wildfire danger. It allows for permitted use of forests during times where fire is a threat, and allows for the revoking of permits, giving foresters complete control of who enters these regions. I would argue that, due to an avenue in place that is legal, it will be less likely that people will illegally enter these regions, since permit requests offer either approval, or education on why they aren't being permitted to enter these areas. Permit closures also safeguard traffic of vehicles and persons through these designated areas.