

Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters, and members of the House Committee on Revenue:

My name is Kate McMichael and I am a small woodland owner living in Lane County.

I am writing today in unequivocal support of SB 485 A—a support that I hope you share.

My wife and I own, live on and actively manage 39 acres of small woodland in Vida. Since the Holiday Farm Fire, our management activities have been primarily focused on post-fire reforestation. It is our hope that in the near future our current level of near-constant activity (pretty close and sometimes exceeding that 75% of days required by the 2023 legislation) will gradually become more standard and allow us time to actually rejoice that our efforts have been successful. We also hope that we will be able to have some leisure to enjoy the fruits of our current labors for some years before we die and our property passes on to heirs. That said, we will continue to actively manage, from now until that day, but in the manner most appropriate for the age and health of our future forest.

This is what SB 485 A makes possible: (a) the recognition that not all natural resource lands are the same and (b) that the particulars of active management of forestland shift with the age and health of the forest in question. In the words of the Bill: the decedent and/or family who inherit “actively manages the forestland property and maintains documentation of activities that are appropriate or customary silvicultural or management activities given the current phase in the forest management cycle for a parcel of forestland property.” Given this requirement covers 10 years of what could be an upwards of 65-100 years after a forest property has been planted, that active management could look very different depending on where on that timeline the transfer from decedent to heir takes place.

This is a wonderfully commonsense technical “edit” that will ensure that more family forestland stays in the hands of the families that love it and manage it. Our forests are a precious resource and voting in support of SB 485 A is a straightforward way to support a segment of the population that pours heart and soul and a lot of sweat equity into caring for that resource, for the benefit both of their own families and of all Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important piece of legislation. Thank you for supporting Oregon natural resource lands and family forest landowners in particular. Thank you for supporting SB 485 A.

Kate McMichael
Vida, OR