

Public Testimony on Senate Bill 485A

Submitted by: B&G Logging

Date: 6/3/25

To: House Revenue Committee

Re: Support for SB 485A – Clarifying the Natural Resource Estate Tax Exemption

Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Levi Beelart, and I'm representing B&G Logging, a multi-generational, family-owned forestry business based in Philomath, Oregon. We rely on the responsible, active management of forest lands that have been in our family for decades. Maintaining family ownership is critical not only for our business but for Oregon's environmental health and rural economy.

We strongly support SB 485A because it fixes an important flaw in the estate tax exemption established by SB 498 in 2023. The previous "75% of working days" bookkeeping rule was designed without fully understanding how forest management works in practice—where activities often occur over decades, not daily or annually. This rule created an unnecessary barrier, making it difficult for many family forest owners to qualify for the \$15 million exemption intended to keep these lands viable and in family hands.

SB 485A provides a practical and fair alternative by allowing forest owners to prove "active management appropriate to a decades-long rotation." This change aligns the law with real-world forestry, ensuring the exemption supports responsible stewardship without adding undue paperwork or complexity.

At the same time Oregon lawmakers consider bills like SB 485A, the state is spending nearly \$600 million on the Capitol Accessibility, Maintenance, and Safety project—over \$100 million more than the original budget—with little public oversight or transparency. Spending on such symbolic projects, like restoring marble walls in a nearly vacant Capitol building, highlights a troubling trend of prioritizing prestige over fiscal responsibility.

Oregon must demonstrate real discipline by cutting wasteful spending in areas like the Capitol renovation before placing additional tax burdens on family forest owners and hardworking taxpayers. SB 485A is not a new tax break, but a necessary correction to prevent families from losing their forest lands due to unfair tax rules in an already challenging economic environment.

We urge the committee to approve SB 485A promptly, to protect Oregon's family forests and promote responsible forest stewardship without adding to taxpayers' burdens.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Levi Beelart

Owner, B&G Logging

Philomath, Oregon