

Submitter: Lycia Shaffner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or HB4105
Topic:

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens and Members of the Committee:

HB 4105 requires the state forester to establish 10-year logging levels, in annual increments, set through rulemaking. This would create additional pressure on the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to increase harvest levels at the expense of natural resource values cherished by Oregonians.

By establishing a mandatory harvest rule, the bill would elevate logging over clean air and water, fish and wildlife habitat, carbon storage and recreation. It would limit the state forester's and the Board of Forestry's ability to protect public resources and prevent the ODF from implementing its Climate Change and Carbon Plan. The bill would only require consideration, not compliance, with the Habitat Conservation Plan and other policies that protect clean water, fish and wildlife habitat and carbon capture.

The bill would create a new right for timber companies, counties and tax districts to sue the ODF for alleged violations of the timber harvest rule, creating endless litigation and limiting the ODF's ability to manage state forests for multiple values. Further, limiting who has the right to sue may be unconstitutional.

Based on 2025 fiscal impact estimates from an identical bill, implementation would require \$1.1 million of initial funding to start this program. The new right to sue the ODF would also cost the state significant resources in ODF and DOJ staff time and legal fees, estimated to upward of ten million dollars per biennium.

The State Forester already sets sustainable harvest levels consistent with the mandate to manage state forests for "Greatest Permanent Value" for all Oregonians and reports this to the public. The ODF has exceeded its harvest objectives over the past 10 years.

The ODF is currently evaluating plans, with the support of timber dependent counties, to increase timber harvest and revenue from state forests for the next ten years in a way that is consistent with the state forest Habitat Conservation Plan.

Western Oregon holds more than 600,000 acres of state public forestlands, from the

Santiam State Forest to the Tillamook and Clatsop, the outskirts of Salem and Portland to the Pacific Coast. Our forests support clean flowing rivers for salmon, critical habitat for a wide range of wildlife, recreation areas, and a robust outdoor economy.

I oppose House Bill 4105 and its amendments. This timber industry bill undermines the state forest habitat conservation plan and would result in more clearcuts, more lawsuits, less habitat for salmon and wildlife, and less carbon storage.

I urge you to oppose this bill. Instead, I encourage this committee to focus on measures that would increase carbon storage in our state forests and safeguard our public resources for our children and future generations.

Please don't let this bill pass out of committee.

Sincerely,

Lycia Shaffner