

Date: Feb. 11, 2026

To: [House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water](#)  
Co-chairs [Rep. Helm](#), [Rep. Owens](#), Vice-chair [Rep. McDonald](#)

Re: **[HB 4105](#): Set Timber Harvest Levels on State Forestland - OPPOSE**

My name is Professor Susan Lea Smith. I am Professor Emeritus, Willamette University, specializing in natural resources law at the College of Law. I have taught forest policy and science for over three decades, including management of state forests as well as federal forests and private forest lands. I strongly oppose HB 4105.

Under current law in [ORS 530.050](#), “the State Forester shall manage State forestlands...so as to secure the greatest permanent value of those lands to the state...” and “do all things and make all rules, not inconsistent with law, necessary or convenient for the management, protection, utilization and conservation of the lands.”

HB 4015 is identical to HB 3103-1, except it removes the General Fund allocation. This bill would restrict that authority by requiring the State Forester to set high, inflexible sustainable timber harvest volume levels by rule, for a ten-year period with strict annual targets, increased if prior years do not meet the targets. Failing to do so, the Department of Forestry would be subject to civil lawsuits. The State Forester can already set rules, but this bill would set harvest volumes as law the State Forester cannot change without significant effort, time, and expense.

**This bill elevates managing forests for short-term timber volume above managing forests for long-term timber volume and value and all other forest values for “greatest permanent value,” such as for recreation, ecological services and carbon sequestration and storage.**

This deprives Oregonians of the greatest permanent value of state forests. Diaz (2018).

Harvesting no earlier than biological maturity, or culmination of annual mean increment, achieves the greatest long-term timber harvest volume and value. In western Oregon, Douglas Fir forests are still maturing at 90 years for high productivity sites and at 120 years for low productivity sites (Curtis, 1995). Yet, with a carefully managed transition and appropriate thinning, timber harvests can be maintained near the current level (e.g. Conservation Northwest, Washington Conservation Action, and Resilient Forestry modeling, 2022) while we maximize sustainable yield, achieve greatest long-term timber harvest volume and value (Northwest Natural Resource Group (2022), substantially increase carbon storage (Carlisle, 2023), sustain overall water availability and protect critical summer flows for salmon and other species (Perry & Jones, 2016), reduce erosion, flooding and landslides, improve water quality, and maintain healthy wildlife habitat on state forests.

The Board of Forestry approved the Climate Change and Carbon Plan (CCCP) after careful deliberation and legal delay, and this bill would undermine the goals of that plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon to combat climate change, as well as those of the [Vision for Oregon's Forests](#). It would also undermine Governor Kotek's Executive Order on climate, the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and the work of the Adaptive Management committee that considers balancing all the values and conditions of our state forests. Our forests have more value to Oregonians than as a commodity sold to produce revenue.

Requiring the State Forester to set high, inflexible sustainable timber harvest volume levels for a ten-year period with strict annual targets flies in the face of the reality disclosed by the 2025 DOE carbon inventory. That inventory indicates a substantial decline in carbon stored on Oregon forest lands between 1990 and 2024 at a time when we need to be steadily increasing carbon stored on our forests.

**I strongly urge the Committee NOT PASS this bill** which commits the State Forester to high, suboptimal timber harvests and impairs her ability to react as conditions change. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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