

Submitter: Ellen Mendoza

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4105

Under statute, the State forests are to be managed for their greatest permanent value. Historically, ODF has focussed on logging their lands, and given other values scant notice. Even though the public would get more out of these lands if they were managed to enhance clean water, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration and non-motorized recreation, this bill would require state forests to be managed primarily for logging, at the expense of these other legitimate management goals.

HB 4105 upsets the current balance requiring state forests to be managed for multiple values to benefit all Oregonians and elevates timber harvest over other laws, rules and policies. Section1, Subsection 4 requires the state forester to only “consider”, not comply with, other laws, rules, and policies. These include plans and policies to protect clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation, and measures to increase carbon sequestration. The bill would also undermine the Western Oregon State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The HCP provides balanced protection for 17 species of salmon and wildlife that are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. It would also undermine ODF’s ability to implement its Climate Change and Carbon Plan (Climate Plan) on state forests. Adopted by the Board of Forestry in 2021, the Climate Plan’s goal is to establish Oregon as a national leader in climate-smart forestry, including longer rotation ages between harvests and a carbon market program for state forests. HB 4105 requires a rule establishing 10-year harvest levels that would override the Climate Plan. The harvest rule would also not be required to be consistent with the Governor’s Executive Order 25-26 to preserve an additional 10% of Oregon’s land and waters in ten years, with state forests leading by example.

HB 4105 should not go forward. Instead ODF should preserve the watersheds which provide water to humans and habitat for salmon. ODF should preserve the oldest and most complex forests for carbon sequestration, wildlife and recreation for us to admire and enjoy them. State forests represent only 3% of the forests in Oregon. We do not in any way need to cut them down!